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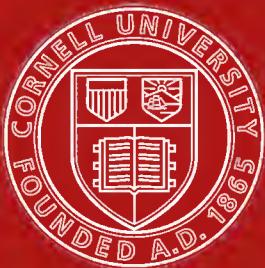
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New spirit in drama & art.



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THE NEW SPIRIT IN DRAMA
AND ART

THE NEW SPIRIT IN DRAMA & ART

BY

HUNTLY *W* CARTER



LONDON
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P R E F A C E

IT cannot be denied that the theatre and drama in England are in a transition state. Between the theatre and drama of the nineteenth and those of the twentieth century a long period of transformation will be necessary. The question for students is whether this transformation is to give us a great theatre and a great drama or only a weak imitation of bygone and obsolete forms. At the outset we are faced by the fact that England can no longer be regarded as insular in the matter of ideas. Ideas know no boundaries, and those of the reform of the European theatre and drama are at our doors. This involves us in the necessity of opening our stage to what may be called European influences : influences which we have to employ for our own purposes in the erection of a truly national theatre.

In the following pages I have been at pains to examine the ideas now being experimented upon in the chief art centres of Europe. It must be understood that I collected them during a brief tour through Europe last autumn ; that I visited only the cities and towns dealt with ; that the book does not exhaust the subjects of which it treats, but is intended to be an outline survey of Continental influences in drama and art that are beginning to make themselves felt in this country ; and that in no instance do I feel bound to any one of the Continental ideas I herein expound. But they are all to be taken into serious account. For instance, the attempt to evolve a new type of theatre, a new stage and a new setting,

before we know exactly what new form the drama is going to take, is to me a proof that reformers are putting the cart before the horse, as usual. The experiments are none the less valuable, seeing that they call attention to the pressing need of a new form of drama. Though the theatre and drama have not yet learnt to dance, at least they are throwing off the bonds of the conventional and attaining freedom in perhaps a heavy and clumsy fashion.

My own idea of the finest form of national drama which this country will see adopted comprises a rhythmic conception of play, player, decoration, and music. This drama will be represented in a rhythmic form of theatre. Everything henceforth is to be orchestrated to produce a single but infinitely varied total effect. We need a stage which lends itself to the simple and single vision, that brings even the most unintelligent spectator into the action of the drama and holds him there, that promotes a direction of effort on the part of all concerned which will unify the results.

It will be found that the present search in Europe is for artistic rather than for rhythmic results. The pioneers of the new movement are chiefly concerned with attaining artistic simplification, unity, and suggestion. They are interpreting these ideas in the endeavour to bring order and beauty into the theatre. So far they have not made the attempt to seize the great rhythm of life and to set the theatre and drama in motion with it. But this will come. Their exact interpretation of the new ideas will be found in the chapter entitled "Summary and Suggestions."

HUNTLY CARTER.

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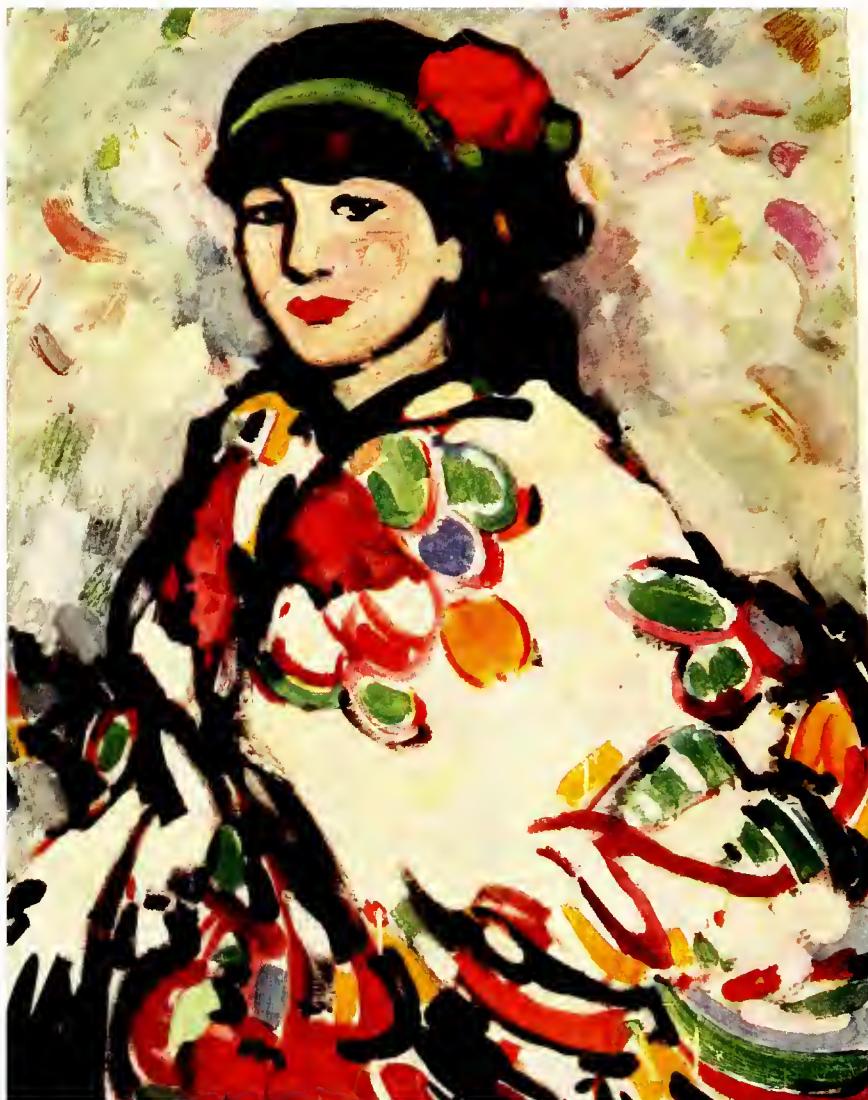
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THE NEW SPIRIT IN DRAMA AND ART

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER WHITHER ?

THERE is no tyranny like liberty. The desire of it has governed MAN ; MAN is now endeavouring to govern liberty. This is the spirit of to-day. Lord Acton believed that modern history was the history of the emancipation of conscience from the control of power. Looking back, he saw the Divine Right of the Church being replaced by the Divine Right of the State, and this in turn by the Divine Right of the Individual. To him it was a delight to see the State fettered and the individual free. But there is nothing new in the transference of power ; it has been going on from the beginning. Ever since the world began there has been the question of government by force and government by consent, of the control of the individual and control by the individual, of authority and liberty. Possibly it is true there is nothing new under the sun ; but we like to think there is something new, all the same.

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This Age, for instance, we regard as the Age of the New. But it is not to be confounded with the new age, which is quite another thing. Perhaps the latter is the one new thing under the sun. Unfortunately, we are unable to speak definitely on the subject, seeing that the term New Age is a dancing call to Utopia, its revelries and joys ; and utopias, like ideals, are unrealisable, and therefore not the sort of things we may keep in our midst long enough to gauge their intellectual, moral, or emotional content.

Five or six years ago I remember reading somewhere in the defunct *Tribune* an amusing dialogue between a modern and a cave-dweller. Or it may have been a cave-dweller's skull. In any case, it was unsuspectedly intelligent. The modern boasted rather loudly of modern progress, and pointed proudly to the quantity and quality of mechanical inventions for conquering space and time. The ancient skull was not however, impressed ; it kept its head. These inventions, it argued, are merely instruments of destruction in another form. They are man-made, whereas those of his time were God-made. To-day in the air are monstrous aeroplanes, in the water are murderous Dreadnoughts, and under the water equally destructive submarines. In former days, in the air were gigantic flying lizards, and the iron-jawed *rhamphorhynchus*. In the trees were the terrible deinosaurs, mastodons, *tinoceratidæ*. In the water murderous *palæoniscidæ* and swimming reptiles. The skull maintained that, in fact, the world was on a lower plane than in remote bygone ages, seeing that moderns had only succeeded in putting the souls of man and beast into portentous machines. Beyond this,

they had buried the imagination of man and erected a pretentious monument of materialism over the remains. Continuing in this fashion, the specimen from the ethnological museum concluded that civilisation had robbed man of the world within once greatly prized by men of quality, and had compensated him with the world without, a spurious form of property prized by auctioneers. It concluded that modern life is, indeed, a sorry fact and the dawning of the millennium is imminent. The modern might have reminded the relic that this dawning of the millennium has a wonderful staying power. Human beings have always had a strong belief in it. It seems to be essential to a certain form of advance. It does express the desire for change. The world to-day is in that unsettled condition which denotes change ; and in this condition men are reconsidering the things about them, as though they would make a re-departure. Can it be for the world within, once again ? If so, there is nothing new in it.

The talk of the new arises from a mistaken idea of evolution. Some persons maintain there is no such thing as evolution. They have made the distressing discovery that Darwin did not know his business. Then there are persons who accept evolution, but as a straight line. It must be one of these straight-line evolutionists who prophesies that in time the human race will be bald and that the loss of hair will be the straight-cut to increased intelligence. Another of these luxuriant prophets predicts the coming of a race of giants who will outlive Methuselah and will never be troubled with toothache. Still another is for imparting the secret of ever-

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lasting life. If man will only consent to forgo his ordinary diet and will partake only of that contained in the air he breathes—he may live for ever. Most persons will prefer to evolve on the old lines—the ordinary diet followed by an undertaker and a comfortable funeral. Of course, rightly considered, evolution does not proceed in a straight line, but in cycles, in pyramidal form. Thus every age has its birth, growth, development, and decay. Our own age, for instance, appears to have arrived at its period of philosophy. Under the guidance of Clement of Alexandria disguised as Bergson it is rediscovering the higher intuitions and creative evolution is about once more. It was about in Goethe's time when he wrote, “Nature is ever shaping new forms ; what is has never yet been ; what has been comes not again. Everything is new, and yet nought but the old.” Thus he stamped himself as one of the epoch-making discoverers in the long life of the philosophy. This new-old philosophy promises interesting results. For one thing, to restore the balance of perception and sensation in human beings and to promote the growth of the rhythmic conscience. Along with this must go an increasing recognition of the laws of unity and continuity underlying the scheme of the universe, and the power to see life as a whole and not in detached unrelated parts. The enormous importance of rhythm in life is already beginning to be felt. Bergson's work in this direction was largely supplemented by that of the late Professor Tard, who traced the idea of rhythm in all the departments of nature—the rhythm of life and death, of waking and sleeping, the physiology and psychology of rhythm. But the idea of rhythm is not new. It was

conceived, studied, and understood by the Chinese painter thousands of years ago, as Mr Laurence Binyon reminds us in his admirable little book, *The Flight of the Dragon*. It is another rediscovery—that is all. And it confirms the belief that this is only an age of the rediscovery. What, for instance, is futurism but starting again with the rediscovery of the subconscious self which materialism has mislaid? What is modernism but bringing old things up to date? What is Eutopianism but reviving and improving old and unattainable ideals?

In every age there is the question raised as to the direction the human race is taking. Each age in turn has resurrected the old devils of decadence and degeneration, as well as the deities of natural and spiritual glory. The question is before us to-day, and the answer is that facts, not fancies, incontestably point to a general movement towards a period of definite expansion. Civilised races are indeed passing from physical contraction to spiritual expansion, from the world without to the world within, thence to the world without again.

Thus man presses forward to liberty, this time to the liberty of conscience. He has attained the physical climax: will he attain the spiritual also? Be once more the Man-God? Material man in love with the spiritual, opposed by his own weak moral judgment? Will this moral judgment prevail and hurl man to destruction? Or—? Such is the theme of the new world-drama now shaping in our midst. This is the theme of the national and cosmic conscience that demands a new theatre, both national and cosmic, for its

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treatment. It is the theme which a new order of artists—both national and cosmic patriots, poets, painters, architects, actors,—working separately yet together, have to see the essential truths of and to express. How are they preparing to do so?



STUDY BY LEON BAKST.
(RUSSIAN BALLET.)

I

THE NEW SPIRIT IN LONDON

I

The coming of the *Æsthetic* theatre—Its origin and rise—Its introduction by Reinhardt, the Russian Ballets and the Moscow Art Theatre—Their influence—The possible direction of the æsthetic movement.

THAT there is a general tendency in this country towards psychic and æsthetic expansion must be allowed. The line of advance is indeed upward and outward. Men have grown tired of the contracting influence of materialism, and they are in active revolt against the brutally ugly and the submerged phases of civilised life. So, on the one hand, the breakdown of science in the attempt to explain the physical world is handing men's thoughts over to the control and direction of a new conception of human life, its facts, significance, and morality, and to the understanding of the resources for realising the purpose of the new world thus created. And, on the other, various Eastern influences—notably the study of Oriental literature, which, with the aid of Max Müller, reached its culmination a few years ago,—the effect on ethics of the revival of Spinozaism and Eastern Pantheism, and perhaps the revival of Greek political thought at Oxford

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during the last fifty years, are adding a mystical impulse to this latest world interpretation. Along with these two goes the return to the purifying effect of æsthetics applied to all forms of human thought and action, from the Geddesian opening to the Godesian close, from Civic renascence with its Trinity, the God-like city, the God-like man, and the God-like occupation, to Catholic renascence, the merging of man in the Absolute. In this way a new vision of heaven has arisen which is remoulding the external hell, rendering it a domain more golden with the grace of hygiene, co-operation, and the spirit of the joy of life. This inexhaustible grace has touched the theatre and drama, and in the renascence of open-air æsthetics, speech, song, dance, music, and pageantry, the new spirit of expansion is fully expressed.

Art is constantly opening new doors upon infinity. Drama has been prevented from doing so by evils of representation. The barrier is about to be removed. There is taking shape in our midst a new and a great theatre movement that will soon be followed and studied even by those upon whom the spirit of progress possesses no hold. The movement, which is an æsthetic one, is partly the outcome of a desire for the restoration of the lyrical in drama, and partly of a demand for a loftier attitude towards both the theatre and drama, and partly a response to the growing spirit of simplicity. It is felt there should be, if not a spirit of reverence, at least one of artistic understanding. The objection may be raised that this is too much to expect of a large section of the public who patronise the theatre and are mediocre in taste and unsound in judgment. And the mediocre we shall always have with us,

simply because the mind and taste of the mass of the public will remain mediocre. As Goethe reminds us, "the mass of the public delights in the mediocre ; it gives them no cause to think, and it gives them the comfortable feeling of intercourse with what is like themselves." But even the mediocre mind may be carried out of itself and lifted to heights by lyricism. It is a well-known fact that the true lyric element levels audiences. Darwin aside, there is no reason why playgoers of the simian type should not for fleeting moments reach the level of the brainy persons who patronise our "Little Theatres." Singing drama, singing books, singing pictures, make a universal appeal where the unlyrical things go unheeded. It is because our best plays, books, and pictures to-day do not sing and laugh that they are so insufferably dull. They should all be packed off to a throat doctor.

In former times dramatic representations appear to have been far more interesting and in a sense better managed than in modern times. "In Greece at one time," says Professor Stanley Hall, "the drama was a form of religion, the theatre a temple. At the Dionysia and the Panathenia tragedy trod the heights of Olympus. The dramatists wrote of the gods, the actors spoke of themselves as the survivors of the gods, and adorned the temple with their masks after each performance. Homer, Hesiod, Æschylus ascended supreme heights in search of the ideal and of truth. The Greek theatre performed the highest function of the theatre : it held up heroic examples to mankind. It revealed man's struggle with destiny, but it was a Titanic struggle." This reverent and heroic attitude towards the drama bred a stern, unbending,

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reverent yet festival attitude in the Greek audience. There is no reason why such an attitude should not be attained to-day by the reintroduction of the heroic element into drama, and the poetic treatment of the cosmic theme in place of the parochial theme. Again, in the Middle Ages, the drama was still a form of religion. The dramatist, having discovered the Bible, strove to rise on waves of emotion to Heaven in order to induce the Deity to descend and explain His system of metaphysics. The dramatist also contrived to induce the Devil to stand forward in his own defence, but it is not clear whether he went to Hell for the purpose. The mediæval morality and miracle plays, in short, were the means of expressing a variation of the Greek theme. In these plays the God-Man idea takes the place of the Man-God idea. In so doing they hold up, not heroic, but lyrical examples of mankind. They were written, in fact, at a moment when the play instinct in the race was intensest, and the drama was a joyous rehearsal of life, deeply tinted with the religious mood. They were written, too, for audiences full of the play spirit, just as audiences to-day might be if only life itself were made less dull and more joyous, and the drama were to express its humour, not its bitter sordidness.

With regard to the origin of the movement inside the theatre, it is safe to say it may be found largely in the modern study and representation of these old plays, which the search for artistic simplicity is promoting. At least two pioneers of simplicity, Mr. William Poel and Mr. Gordon Craig, have revealed in representation of these plays exactly the qualities essential to the rewriting of the drama and the rebuilding of

the theatre. The qualities are a great simplicity of spirit, means and treatment, that lent themselves to the various devices of the form of the art of the theatre prevalent in the Middle Ages, and that would lend themselves to the devices which are being tested to-day.

The old devices were of course extremely crude. In fact, they consisted of little more than investing plays and pageants with the glory of gold and tinsel, as with a votive offering, and wedding them to appropriate dance and music. In this way the *Moralities* and *Miracles* that were no doubt fostered by the literary ambition of Spenser and Milton, as well as the *Masques* that came by way of Italy and were welcomed alike by poet and artist and the cultured court, made their appeal through the imagination and the eye. Likewise, Shakespeare had his message of beauty of diction and simplicity of representation. He transmitted the latter to posterity, with the result that it has been caught up and is leading to the re-discovery of the Shakespearean stage to-day. But though the Shakespearean form of theatre offers an admirable medium for artists, it does not appear to have been served by artists in Shakespeare's time. That is, artists did not work for it, as they are doing for the modern theatre. For one thing, it did not exhibit scenery, painted cloth as we understand it being a modern innovation.

It would be extremely interesting fully to trace the adventures in time of Shakespeare's message, if only space allowed. It appears to have left England soon after its birth and to have travelled to France, Italy, and other places abroad. After a time it reached Germany, where we discover it making

love to Goethe. The author of *Faust* responded to its overtures and allowed it to influence his ideas, dramatic and otherwise. Whether it directly moulded his idea concerning the reform of the theatre is not clear. Goethe had, it appears, a strong belief in a revised form of the representation of realistic drama. It was he who, with Schiller, presented the modern idea of intimacy in the theatre. He also attempted to return to a more human conception of dramatic characters. In all this he was merely diluting Shakespeare with Rousseau. It is well known that he took liberal doses of Rousseau, whose philosophy of a return to nature he swallowed and re-expressed as far as it is possible for the Teutonic temperament to express the philosophy of the Latin one.

At Goethe's time there was a parallel movement in England towards the reform of the theatre. The bitter struggle for a free theatre was ended. With the breakdown of the State regulation of theatres in 1843, by which two theatres, Covent Garden and Drury Lane, were alone privileged to produce Shakespeare and national drama, came a remarkable expansion in the theatre, accompanied to some slight extent by art. We have it on record that with the development of painted cloth the scene bred both distinguished painters like David Cox and Clarkson Stanfield, and pictorial representation. This sort of pictorialism reached its culminating point in Irving, who was one of the first to distinguish and promote the mood of a scene, giving it full expression by means of colour, sound, and movement, and this with the aid of well-known modern artists—among them Sir Alma Tadema and Ford Madox Brown. But though Irving made many contribu-

tions towards, and may be said to have laid the foundations of, the modern theatre movement in his own crude fashion, he missed the one great essential to it, and indeed to art—namely, simplicity. His scenes were as much over-elaborated as those at His Majesty's Theatre are overloaded with unessential details.

We may note with great interest at least one contribution. Mr. Gordon Craig was for a time a member of Irving's company, and it is quite possible that his artistic imagination was fired by the tremendous bigness and a certain splendour of Irving's conceptions. There is no doubt that he derived—as all original minds derive—something in this way which he afterwards applied in the practice of his own teaching. From the very beginning artistic representation has been the ruling passion of Mr. Craig. Accordingly his teaching has throughout been based on ideas of simplicity in treatment, and unity of colour, sound, and movement. Such ideas he has applied to big Shakespearean and Ibsen productions, and to pieces of more modest dimensions, such as that transitional Masque-opera by Purcell, *Aeneas and Dido*.

In the work of Mr. Craig we may also trace the further appearance of the adventurous message of Shakespeare. This message of simplicity had come once more to make its call in England, and was influencing not only Mr. Craig but another English producer who had likewise discovered the secret that the finest and most impressive expressions are characterised by the greatest simplicity. Thus through Mr. William Poel, whose fine pioneer efforts, distinguished by dignity and loftiness of aim, have done so much, quietly and unostentatiously

and in the face of stupid misunderstanding, to foster the spirit of reform, the message of Shakespeare and the Middle Ages has prevailed again.

The peripatetic message, now firmly merged in the modern idea of unity, finding itself neglected in England, next accompanies Mr Craig abroad to Europe. Here, finding itself on fertile ground, it moved about for a period of years, transforming men's ideas concerning the scene or setting of the drama. At the same time, working side by side with this, went the Goethe-Schiller idea of the reform of the theatre or the housing of the drama. This idea, which was first realised in an intimate theatre, planned according to Goethe's suggestion by Schinkel, had been working on the Continent what time the seeds of simplicity and unity were being sown in England. Thus it had been caught up by Wagner and expressed in the new type of theatre originated by himself and Semper, and designed to preserve in the spectator the mood created by the drama or the opera. Beyond this, an attempt was being made to realise Goethe's idea of extreme naturalism, and to promote the feeling of intimacy still further by a revival of the Greek, Japanese, Shakespearean, and Molière conventional forms of *rapprochement* between the audience and the actors. Accordingly, the stage itself was fast becoming a mere continuation of the auditorium, and *vice versa*, while actors were being sprinkled over gasping audiences, as plentifully as flies over suffering sugar-bowls. Gradually the two main ideas, the reform of the scene and the reform of the theatre, have come together, and to-day we find them fully expressed in the work of the German actor and producer, Professor Max Reinhardt.



STUDY BY LEON BAKST.
(RUSSIAN BALLET.)

It was Professor Reinhardt who reintroduced the Shakespearean idea to this country, after having brought it, with the aid of his group of distinguished co-operators, to undreamt-of proportions. Through the enterprise of Mr Oswald Stoll, it first reappeared as a star turn at the Coliseum, disguised as *Sumurún*, a mimo-drama by Friedrich Freska. *Freksa*

The distinguishing feature of this Eastern story without words was a tremendous simplicity of treatment. Noticeable beyond this was the bold application of realistic colour, by Ernst Stern, as well as the revival of old conventions of intimacy. The production had, in fact, several very interesting innovations, which may be gathered from the following extract from an article written by me. After pointing to the reasons of the success of *Sumurún*, the article continues:—

“The fantasy is divided into seven scenes, and the varieties of colour themes illustrated are in accordance. Each scene has its dominant colour theme, which is reached from various standpoints. As in the Chinese theatre, referred to by Miss Loie Fuller, there is little or no lowering of tones for the sake of harmony. Rich Oriental colours, not tones, flow in, meet and compose, never failing to achieve a definite unity. In consequence, the scenes are saturated with singing coloured atmosphere created by harmonies of contrast. ‘Pictures’ race through the play. One of the most beautiful effects is obtained in the darkened interior of the hunchback’s theatre, by the dome focus-light and the coloured mediums on the perches in the prompt corner being concentrated upon a mass of draperies where the slave makes her quick changes of costume. At the same time the footlights of the bijou

theatre are diffused softly over the coloured forms and faces of the audience in the darkened pit. Another striking effect, with a distinct echo of something big and interesting that has been tried successfully at the Châtelet Theatre, Paris, is noticeable in the composition in the flat, or 'silhouette,' scene, where the towers and minarets of a palace come together against a poetic night sky, and one simple mass is bosomed high against another simple mass ; while joyous figures dressed in warm colour drift across the low grey wall. The merchant's shop, too, adds to the series of unusually effective compositions. Here the rich-coloured draperies, spread about and hung on reversible shutters, produce, as it were, innumerable love lyrics in a variety of colour compositions, proving that the producer and Herr Stern are amourettists of rare resource, ingenuity, and distinction. The courtyard of the Sheik's palace is very simply and effectively treated, being merely an open space surrounded by three empty Eastern white walls, and entered by arched doorways. In the wall facing the audience a latticed window has been introduced in order to bring in warm flesh tones, and the bright colours of the women slaves behind it. The interior that follows, though melodious throughout with vibrating coloured atmosphere, is overdone. The crowning of the faithless wife and her lover with garlands showered from a balcony, and the meaningless scattering of flowers is cheap, and mirrors pantomime. The over-elaboration of this scene is felt when contrasted with the severe simplicity of the succeeding bedroom scene. Here, too, an alteration is desirable. The over-imposing yellow lamp that crowns the bed looks like a lighthouse beacon. The

light should be reduced to two unobtrusive coloured flames symbolical of Eastern passion and jealousy, the keynote of the scene. Also, the composition of the scene should be more together.

“There are, besides these minor defects, a number of general defects. The first is that of the clash of conventions. In an endeavour to bring poetry into the theatre Professor Reinhardt has gone to the East for many of his ideas. He has, in fact, helped himself largely to Eastern convention, and seeks to adapt it to the Western stage, just as the East is helping itself to Western convention. The result in some cases is disastrous. The use of the bridge across the Coliseum auditorium is for one thing very confusing. Though it is legitimate in the Chinese theatre, where this kind of intimacy is accepted and understood, it does not accord with our Western realistic notions ; and though to imaginative Orientals it may create the vision of characters coming from a distance or nowhere, to unimaginative Europeans it means nothing more than a free look at made-up professionals at close quarters. In other words, the introduction of this convention only serves to throw the play out of balance and to destroy the desired illusion. If something new is desired, why not let the characters coming from a distance come on from the prompt or o.p. entrance and make their entrance to the scene through the drop curtains, drawn together for the purpose ?

“Again, many of the entrances and exits of the characters appear badly arranged. If it is purposely done in an attempt to follow another Eastern tradition of characters drifting symbolically on and off the scene, well and good. To be

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effective, however, it should be done under Eastern conditions. The scenery should not be realistic, an elaborately carpentered affair, or a very careful arrangement of cut cloths ; but imaginative and suggested.

“ And again, here and there the sets seem to be designed to suggest the fourth wall, especially in the hunchback’s theatre, where the only entrance to the theatre itself is apparently across the footlights.

“ All this is bewildering. Better results might be achieved by adapting Eastern ideas to Western methods, until we have theatres constructed to suit symbolism. Thus the fourth wall might very well be suggested by the use of the drop curtains, replacing the ugly convention known to professionals as the ‘ blind.’ These curtains should be coloured to harmonise with the general colour scheme of the play, and drawn aside by two attendants dressed in colour to symbolise comedy or tragedy as the case may be. The effect of this colour would be to send the scene back.”

There is no need to enter here into details of the further productions in London of Professor Reinhardt, whose main aim is to extract the quintessence of comedy or drama from each play he handles in the attempt to get intimacy, nor to catalogue the principles applied to the two mimo-dramas, *Rialon* and *The Miracle*, as well as to the Reinhardt version of *Œdipus Rex*. The principles are practically the same as those applied to *Sumurūn*. Briefly speaking, their application marks a great advance on the London notion of artistic stagecraft. Even though in *Rialon*, whose remarkable colour treatment was inspired by the Munich secessionists, a great

deal of artistic effect was wasted over a worthless play ; even though in *The Miracle* everything was on so vast a scale, and the situations were so fragmentary, as to defeat the main object of making the audience a part of the action ; and even though *Oedipus Rex* was saturated with the extraordinary personality of the producer rather than with the ancient Greek spirit, there was progress sufficient and necessary to enable London to make a step forward in the desired artistic direction.

Thus Germany, represented by Professor Reinhardt, has caught the critics and public, and is by way of making a conquest of London. But it seems it is not to be permitted to do so alone, for it has found an unexpected rival, yet powerful ally, in Russia. During the recent visit of the Russian Ballets, and of certain ideas that came from the Moscow Art Theatre, we were introduced to co-operative influences by which the path is being gradually cleared for the triumphant arrival here, in this country, of art for the theatre and drama's sake. The Russian Ballets made a further contribution to the artistic treatment of the scene, adding to Professor Reinhardt's dominant principles of simplicity, vitality, and daring realistic symbolism, those of unity, continuity, and rhythm. They were much more successful in obtaining a synthesis of colour, sound, and movement, and to these decorators belongs the distinction of developing the line and so adding a very strong impulse to its renascence. The Russian Ballets may be said to have solved one of the most complicated problems of the modern drama and the "scene," and once again have justified their claim to

be considered the most important contribution to the artistic movement in the theatre of to-day. The problem is that of harmonious and complete co-operation of all the artists concerned in the work of a stage production. With regard to the question of organising groups of co-operators they also offer a practical solution. They reveal that the first essential is a man of wide artistic sympathies like M. Serge de Diaghelew, a connoisseur in modern artists of the theatre, who has the strength and courage to gather together a unique body of great artists, composers, dancers, and decorators of the Moscow and St Petersburg schools, all working in sympathy to create that big æsthetic sensation which proceeds from the fusion of a number of individuals of different temperaments into complete unity of feeling and expression, and which transports a number of hearers beyond themselves. Another essential is a painter-director, like M. Benois, who is able to conceive a theme for representation, to construct it, and to design appropriate decorations and costumes for it. In a word, to interpret the lines, colours, and movements throughout.

The problem is slightly different in the theatre. Here, as everything starts with the dramatist, the solution would be to breed a body of dramatist-directors, equipped with a knowledge of the fundamental principles of music and art, to reconcile the present divergent points of view of the dramatist and decorator. The complete point of view is to be found in the Russian Ballets. These are the first real advance in the third great dramatic movement of the world. First came the Greeks, then Shakespeare, now comes the new

Classicism. The movement has been coming on since Wagner's time. We have had to wait for the decorator to recognise the significance of the leading motive and to employ it as musicians do. The transference of the motive, as the musician uses it, to the ballet and to the decorations is the feature of those wonderful Russian spectacles ; it completes the edifice. The threefold motive runs like a golden cord throughout the production, informing it, building it up, fashioning, as it were, a golden bowl, out of which is poured the nectar of high artistic achievement. How wonderfully it unites everything ! The life of the production may be one long ecstasy of love and hate, and the arrangement of the music may be weak, overbalanced by discords, apparently without resolution, modulating into inexplicable keys, full, too, of unaccustomed phrases ; but it is always held in unison with the dancing and decorations by the leading motives which never fail to brace it to coherence.

The Russian Ballet, then, offers a spectacle of a world wherein a theme is handled with simplicity, beauty, and strength, by three sets of hands working as one, and directed by a master-builder. It may be assumed that the orchestra is the first means of realising the poetic aim of the theme—the illumination, say, of a myth—the Folk's mode of the symbolisation of the phenomena of social life. The second means is the dancers, who form, so to speak, a symphonic body of musical notes or tones for illuminating the harmonic stipulations of the melody. The third is a sympathetic arrangement of musical colour and line for illuminating the stipulations of the other two. Thus the three treatments

of the motive are compressed into an easily comprehended content.

By far the biggest production is M. Bakst's masterpiece, *Schéhérazade*. It is a complete thing. To begin with, the arrangement of the musical material by Rimsky-Korsakoff is especially designed to create an extraordinary atmosphere of Eastern voluptuousness, and to call forth the harmonious and expressive dancing and decorations. The introduction is full of the jagged lines and colours of the departing Persian warriors. This changes to a sound like the throbbing of loosened hearts, and we settle down to participate in the love orgy of the slaves and eunuchs. Then suddenly it tears aside the mist of rich flowing lines and gorgeous sensuous colours to plunge us into the terror of a coming storm. The warrior motive reappears. The lines, colours, and movements change. There is a sharp conflict between the warriors and the unfaithful; a moment of indecision as the favourite pleads for her life. In vain. The gorgeous harem is transformed into a slaughter-house, and on the concluding passages of the music the bodies seem to vanish into space. It is an extraordinary piece of work. There is one big design into which the illuminating music, dancing, and decorations are poured.

After having appeared for six seasons in Paris, and elsewhere, the Russian Ballets reached London. They are the finest thing of the kind that has been seen in this country, and from an artistic point of view might easily win the whole-hearted support of the public. It is doubtful, however, whether they will do so unless the lighting effects at Covent Garden Opera House are drastically altered. Of the

three productions that I saw at Covent Garden, the first, the *Pavillon d'Armide*, for which M. Tchérénine has written the music and M. Benois has invented the decorations, was, artistically considered, meaningless. The second scene, where the design of the "Gobelins" awakens together with Armide and her court, and there comes the breath of stately avenues, the rustle of brocaded silks mingling with dashing steps, the hint of soft words and flushed cheeks, the indescribable charm of contrasted colours wooing each other, was ruined. It was in semi-darkness. Great shadows lay across the front of the stage amid which the pure reds and greens and blues fought bravely to be articulate. The greens of the foliage had lost their high lights; the Veronese background was flooded with a sickly amber lime; while two appalling muddy proscenium wings stood like ogres devouring the colour values. Only for one moment did the scene really live, when the lights began to be lowered and in the twilight the colours came together in a beautiful mass of chromatic vibrations, and silent figures invested it with golden lights; then three gauzes fell silently one upon another as the night mist might deepen. The same fault of bad lighting was observable in *Carnaval*. As the colours moved up stage they lost their meaning. Thus green men became black men, and golden-brown men changed to dirty copper. How different and vivid the colours looked when posed in front of the drop curtain with the house lights full up! The third piece, *Prince Igor*, was not so much affected. It is an opera full of the wild Tartar spirit, and one of the most considerable productions these Russians have given us in which everything

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is national and planned and completed in full harmony with the central idea. One can imagine that tremendous design by Roehrich—outlining the Tartar camp with its angular lines, and the far-reaching zigzagging landscape shut off by pillars of smoke and bathed in reddish browns—filled in with jagged figures in magnificent Caucasian hues and full of delirious movements, such as the wild dance of the Malachite warriors. One would also expect Borodini's music to be characterised by the same violent lines, colour, and movement. It has these, in fact, and more. It has the epic character. Every picture of the miniature drama is mirrored in it ; the loves of the captive Vladimir and the Khan's daughter ; the pride of chivalry and romance ; the elemental forces of a primitive world of festival. It is one more proof that the Russians are masters of emotional and finely coloured music. It says much for the artistic merit of these Ballets that they made a large appeal to the public in spite of the indifferent staging and lighting at Covent Garden Theatre.

It is the application to the scene of the modern principles of simplicity, unity, continuity, and rhythm, that distinguishes the work of the Moscow Art Theatre and brings it into line with that of the Russian Ballets. There are, however, one or two marked differences between the methods of the two schools. The attempt to obtain continuity and unity is not the same ; and whereas the Russian decorators rely largely on the use of the line, thus uniting everything in a scene in a big rhythmic design, the Moscow Theatre decorators are concerned with the unity of light and perspective. Thus the scenes of *The Blue Bird* are continued in infinity, some of

them advancing out of space as the curtain rises and receding again as the curtain falls. This treatment necessitates a great deal of darkness, mistiness, and scumbling of scenes by means of highly ingenious lighting effects and layers of gauze, and keeps the imagination constantly racked in the effort to supply the connecting links. Probably it is based on the old assumption that mysticism is something necessarily vague and indefinite and buried in darkness, which is being replaced by the discovery made by the Russian decorators that mysticism, as the early Egyptians expressed it, is a definite thing, having strength and vitality, and enthroned in a blinding white light.

These principles of the Moscow Art Theatre made their way to England in a highly diluted form, on the wings of *The Blue Bird*, and located themselves at the Haymarket Theatre, the first London theatre to make an appeal to an artistic taste. But their appearance in an English dress was of very little use except to shadow forth their real character. They certainly did not add importance to the unsuitable material to which they were applied.

Perhaps it is due to a falling off in quality, or to Maeterlinck's too frequent use of the visualising word, or to his uncommon visionary mood, or to the abstract nature of the subject, that *The Blue Bird* is largely unsuitable for dramatic representation, and to treat such a subject as Happiness in the pursuit of Truth, on the stage, is to open up many pitfalls for ambitious artists. In any case, neither in London nor in Paris has the play received an entirely satisfactory setting. In London, at the Haymarket Theatre, Mr Trench's attempts to follow the ever evasive Truth into the

mists of the past and possible were, for the most part, bad. At the very outset much of the beauty and suggestiveness of the words was brought into sharp conflict with the artistic poverty of the scene. The cottage interior was commonplace. It was not seen with the eye of the child, in mass. It lacked inspiration and simplicity. It was overcrowded with effects. Everything was too much broken up. The colour, instead of being composed in large simple masses, was dabbed on in little meaningless patches. The next scene, the Palace of the Fairy, was an unfairylike arrangement of garden and architecture with the colours of the symbolic figures trying to sort themselves on a stone seat, the whole being drowned in a glare of electric light. The Land of Memory scene contained nothing more ambitious than a notice-board hung on a tree announcing the locality. The introduction of some touches of colour—a little blue in the background and faint reds and yellows—into the cold and unemotional opening would better have led the child-mind into the traditional country. For the rest, the scenes were far too classical, deliberate, and detailed. They showed no appreciation of the new ideas of continuity and rhythm ; they were not fantastical enough ; they were not full of vast and weird suggestions adding an essential emotional value. The Kingdom of the Future, for instance, though interesting in a Caley Robinson way, with its cold, mystical colour relieved by touches of warm reddish browns, and its big draped figures, was a composition in the past, and did not stimulate the emotional powers of the observer with a suggestion of coming ages or a prophecy of progress. Mr Robinson's

scenes were noticeable for the careful symbolic use of form and colour.

In such ways, then, the Shakespearean message of simplicity has returned, and is to be discovered underlying the three forces that have come to us from Berlin, St Petersburg, and Moscow. The effect of these three on the theatre and various forms of art is very noticeable, and may be briefly summarised as follows. Professor Reinhardt's influence may be detected filtering through the many and varied persons who have been actually engaged in his productions. An instance is given in the index. Such are London managers, leading actors and actresses, and the hundreds of extra people engaged in the crowd scenes. Then there is the added stimulus to the cultural movement in the big music-halls—the Palace, Palladium, Hippodrome, Coliseum, Alhambra, and Empire. Here it is shown in the improvement in scenery and stage effects. Though the lighting is still bad, making the colour garish, serious attempts are being made to introduce nice harmonies of colour, replacing the former crude vulgarity. Besides this, the entertainments are growing more and more refined in tone; while the old chaotic scenes are being replaced by others having unity of scheme and decoration. In fact, the improvement in the music-hall is so great that the artist in search of materials for the study of stage-craft cannot afford to neglect the place any longer. Of course, he has never had a reason to neglect it, seeing there was always more art to be found in the music-hall than in the theatre.

The combined influence is also being manifested in the theatre in the form of innovations in settings and lighting,

though not yet of a remarkable character. The Little Theatre, Adelphi, for instance, has, under the management of Miss Gertrude Kingston, done some interesting pioneer work in this direction, and is fitted with the new horizon and lighting. It appears also to have affected that strange hybrid called pantomime. A Peter-Pan variety of the peculiar form of art with which children are invited to celebrate Christmas is springing up, and in place of the old hybrid is a new growth, having less of the pompous pageant and gaudy dullness of the indirect descendant of the traditional Italian pantomime, and more possibilities of a genuine organic growth on the lines of a beautiful fairy play. Some day we shall see *Dick Whittington* treated as a cosmic theme, with all the resources of art, not as a framework for meaningless and inartistic irrelevancies, and then the child will come into its Christmas kingdom. Again, the Russian Ballets might reasonably claim a share in the present renascence of dancing, in view of the coruscations of its wonderful dancers the great Kshesinsky, Pavlova, Mordkin, and Nijinsky. In any case, their appearance has called forth a tremendous interest in the subject of dancing, together with many exponents, some of whom appear to have trained under polar bears, and dance accordingly, waltzing in an ungainly fashion to any tune you like.

The renascence of music as the expression of the subconsciousness of the drama and audience may also be expected. The return of music to the theatre must be the inevitable outcome of the search for wideness of expression.

The effect of these influences on plastic forms of art is perhaps the most important. The new decorative ideas from



STUDY BY
PHYLLIS VERE CAMPBELL.

Russia, Germany, and Paris have met in London, where they are fashioning new ideals of truth and new ways of translating beauty. They have revealed how the artist may be pressed into the service of the theatre, and art once more into the service of life. They have opened a new vision to the one and new doors upon the spiritual universe to the other.

And they have done this at a most appropriate moment. For there is springing up, parallel with the artistic movement in the theatre, a great decorative revival which is destined to invade all forms of life and to bring artists into active contact and co-operation with life itself. This revival was shown in the recent Post-Expressionist Exhibition at the Grafton Galleries, and is seen elsewhere in the growing demand for mural painting and decoration, as well as in the evident desire on the part of artists themselves to come into active touch with life by asking to be allowed, among other things, to dress our public thoroughfares at festival time, and to co-operate in the work of the theatre. Surely, then, this is the moment of the emergence of the scene from the sterile domain of the cave-dweller and of art from the narrow tyranny of the studio, and the union of the two in the large symbolism of life interpreted on heroic lines. The consummation of this union is devoutly to be desired. But it will depend upon the appearance of the new dramatist. New forms of art cannot successfully be brought into the service of old forms of drama. We want a new drama. We want seers and prophets to write it. We want authors with the seer-like vision of a Plato, Dante, or Ibsen, with the sense of the theatre of a Shakespeare or Wagner, with the child-like simplicity and

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the courage, intensity, and individuality of the great Post-Expressionists ; and, above all, with the joy-of-life spirit of the Middle Ages. We want the tragic-comedian in drama.

II

The decline of the Literary Theatre—Its origin and growth—Its death and burial in a National Theatre.

With the rise of the æsthetic theatre has come a corresponding decline of the purely literary theatre. This was inevitable, seeing that the modern literary drama is not suited to the application of the new principles of art. For one thing, it lacks the lyrical element, and has no rhythmical design. Attempts have been made, both at the Court Theatre and at the Palace Theatre in *Anatol*, to trick out this drama in fine feathers, but unsuccessfully. Before it can be made attractive to the eye it must undergo a new development. In fact, a new form of drama is needed, one lending itself to the widest expression. This means the drama must be constructed according to a new conception of dramatic action. The conception of dramatic action has always varied. Sophocles, Shakespeare, Racine, Goethe, Wagner, Ibsen have only names in common as dramatists ; they have no common standard of dramatic action. Sophocles was concerned with one form of technique slightly differing from the Æschylean and Euripidean forms. Wagner and Ibsen created new forms just as the so-called Post-Expressionists revolutionised the technique of painting. The new dramatic action will be composed of clear-cut yet properly related parts, consisting of music,

colour, line, speech, and movement, all developing and developed to the fullest and widest expressiveness from one fundamental motive. Thus, through its co-operation with music and appropriate decoration the drama will attain an undreamt-of importance. And thus it will not go back but forward, moving its wings boldly in the rich domain Wagner and Ibsen have created for it.

The English literary drama is not new. It is, in fact, as old as Spenser's *Faery Queen*, as Milton's *Comus*, as Shakespeare. The modern literary drama dates from Ibsen, who, working with the spiritual heritage of his race and of Shakespeare, brought the play-form to its modern proportions, and achieved a technique which is destined to develop the greatest form of drama the world has seen. Ibsen welded the play into an organic whole, and made it an unbroken crescendo of enlightenment from physical climax opening to spiritual climax close. He made it a revelation of the soul of man, and thus brought it once more into line with the finest tradition of drama—drama of amazing power and grandeur. The Ibsen drama is indeed the opening chapters of the New Book of Revelations.

The English theatre was once given an opportunity of continuing this book. When Mr William Archer rendered this country the inestimable service of importing Ibsen to England he unconsciously offered the theatre a new spiritual stimulus. But his contemporaries, critics, dramatists, and producers, little understood the avenues of mystical expression which he was transplanting. The new beginnings of a symbolic interpretation of life that had been felt, though

not fully expressed, in the old mysteries and moralities were there, though unperceived. There, indeed, was the much-needed religious advance of the drama upon the crude naturalism of Caste, School, Society, just as Robertson's return to nature was necessary to rescue the drama from the early Victorian gilded saloon, gin-palace, club, and Cremorne. But men did not see it. How could they with their eyes hooded with the extravagant and dogmatic materialism and rationalism of the nineteenth century ? What could be further apart than Ibsen's vision of contemporary men and women as eternal symbols expressing the human revolt against the lie as well as the unending search for freedom, and the rationalistic conception of man as a self-contained machine impelled by appetites common to all animals and raised above his fellow-beasts by cunning and cruelty ; than the vision of the enlightenment of souls, and the meaningless parade of the bodily forms of things ? So, naturally, the realists and rationalists accepted Ibsen as a dramatist with a point of view which they adjusted to their own, instead of the reverse, dressed him in a frock-coat, crowned him with a top hat, and hailed him as master. Of the glory of his patient insight into the strivings of the half-conscious, half-articulate human soul they left not a trace.

This misunderstanding of Ibsen has had two inevitable effects. It has bred a race of realists where only symbolists ought to be ; and it has destroyed the theatre. Most of the dramatists who came after Ibsen seemed to be in doubt whether social science and the drama should not exchange name and nature. So, on the one hand, we had a drama that

had no higher aim than to illustrate current events, and every recent phase of current life and thought—materialism, rationalism, democratic Socialism, Karl Marxian economics, hypnotism, pseudo-mysticism, affections of the nervous system, clinical studies in hysteria-epilepsy ; and to offer plays like Curel's *La Nouvelle Idole*, in which pathology, psychology, and neuropathy were discussed *ad nauseam*.

On the other hand, we had an Aristotelian outburst of drama. Everywhere there was an application of the principles of Aristotle and a glorification of the theory of the Syllogism. Everywhere there was an unexampled zeal for *experimentia tabulata*, for endless lists of heads of argumentation, for topics selected purely for the logical distinction which they contained. How closely Aristotle was followed may be gathered from the synopsis of *Rhetoric*, I. and II., which is but a synopsis of the motives of the modern drama :—(1) A summary of the motives of human action ; (2) an analytical account of human motives ; (3) an analysis of the moods of mind in which men commit injustice ; (4) a distinction between different kinds of law and right ; (5) remarks on degrees of guilt. For proof one may turn to such works as M. Hervieu's geometrical and algebraical exercises, Suderman's mixture of Marx and Darwin, Brieux's ineffectual digs at the hollowness of the social system, to *Les Affaires*, *Die Weber*, *Frühlings Erwachen*, *Strife*, *Justice*, *Mrs Warren's Profession*, and other popular disseminators of rationalistic thought. The Aristotelian process of enlightenment may be seen in full blast in *Mrs Warren's Profession*. Contrast Viva's awakening with the un-Aristotelian process of enlightenment that Nora goes through. In the one we are

conscious only of an author engaged in tiresome argument; in the other, only of a soul's unfolding.

But if dramatists followed Aristotle in the above directions, they missed his best point, namely, that "tragedy aims at representing men who are above the average." Tragedy to-day aims to represent nothing but the dregs of society, characters that are morally bad and ugly. But in thus aiming to abolish all that is noble, generous, and beautiful in the expression of characters represented, the modern drama has defeated its own end. The essence of ancient drama, it will be remembered, was destiny or fate as master of man; the will of man was powerless without the help and sanction of the gods. The essence of modern drama is man master of destiny or fate; human beings act of their own free will, and make or mar their own lives. In order to demonstrate this exercise of free will, modern dramatists have selected unbalanced and diseased types, apparently quite unconscious that the sick, mentally and morally, have not the power to exercise free will. In fact, they are dominated by disease and are acted upon. They do not act upon. Perhaps the absence of life-force in the characters treated accounts for the absence of life-force in the drama itself.

The misunderstanding of Ibsen, then, in breeding a race of realists, also bred a so-called realistic drama, an ugly duckling, in fact, to whom sentimentality was the rankest poison, who neglected the current rigid, meaningless, *répertoire* of words and phrases, and flourished on a language direct, brutal, and living. This offspring of the nineteenth-century disillusionists began life in the midst of tears and unloveliness.



SECTION OF THE STAGE
AND AUDITORIUM OF THE
LIVERPOOL REPERTORY THEATRE.

Preferring shadow and gloom to the sunlit side of life, it dressed itself in sackcloth, put ashes on its head, drank deeply of gall, and told the modern story of mankind in his self-created Hell (the agony of failure). Of mankind in Heaven (the ecstasy of success), of the aristocracy of life, it knew or said nothing. The equipment this skinny fowl required for expression was correspondingly meagre. It consisted, indeed, of two trestles, a plank, and an idea. As with Paul Adam, the aim was to put an idea on the stage, each side of the idea to be represented by one or more characters, who were thus thrown together and left to fight it out. Apparently the main object of this drama was to detheatralise itself. It took reality into the theatre only to prove how unsuitable the theatre is to represent reality. The failure of realism to be real on the stage may be seen in the attempt to represent degeneracy, *i.e.* marked deviation from an original type, as seen in an unhealthy offspring or a complete human failure. Though it was possible to represent the mental imperfection of such a character, it was not possible to exhibit corresponding physical imperfections. The stigmata of degeneracy were missing. There were no ears of enormous size that protrude like jug handles, no lobes deficient or sticking to the head, no squint-eyes, hare-lips, irregularities or absence of teeth, no webbed or supernumerary fingers, no unequal development of the two halves of the face and cranium. On the contrary, stage "degenerates" were always beautifully perfect and proportioned, and the essential labels were missing, either because no manager with common sense would engage freaks, or because this class of human curiosity is to be met

only in its proper place, a side-show or the nearest lunatic asylum. The fact is, the realist disillusionists did not go far enough. They wrote up the diseased fragments of social life, and they engaged normal types to represent them, either because they had not the biological knowledge requisite to complete their undertaking, or because they had not the courage to scour our infirmaries, hospitals, and lunatic asylums for the real thing. Biologically considered, then, the attempt of modern dramatists to be realistic is a complete failure. Their stage families have not even a nose in common.

They have used the theatre as a house of convenience, and in so doing have destroyed it. If the theatre was obsolete before the wild duckling crossed its threshold, it was useless before the duckling had finished its first quack. So to-day we are faced with a disenfranchised drama confronting a theatre whereon is written in big type: "This house is a house of art; but ye have made it a den of disease."

From this it may be gathered that Ibsen was ruined in this country by his English interpreters, who, the more sympathetic they were, the more deadly they became. Ibsen, for example, has never recovered from Mr Bernard Shaw's victimisation of him. Together with Shakespeare, he was butchered to make a Fabian holiday.

We can hardly blame Mr Shaw for his treatment of Shakespeare and Ibsen. If anyone is to be blamed it is those who brought Ibsen to this country when Mr Shaw and his doctrine of realism were about. They certainly ought to have known better. When Ibsen arrived, the socialistic movement in the theatre was just beginning. Mr Shaw,

who is neither an artist nor a poet, was busy with socialistic propaganda. He had no use for Ibsen as an illuminator of soul states. On the contrary, he had every use for Ibsen as a social reformer and realist. It was therefore his business to evolve Ibsen on Fabian lines. It was part of a policy which he had formulated to capture the public by a direct and sensational handling of social problems. He hoped to secure its interest by a crude treatment of the economics and psychology of vice, and the exploitation of the well-worn theme that vice is an economic fact and the result of poverty, and this in spite of incontestable evidence that vice exists everywhere—in high places as well as low, among both the rich and poor. This led to the subsequent appearance on the stage of the sexual question as the pivot of social life, which became merely an abomination in Mr Shaw's hands, seeing that he had not the capacity to understand the real significance of the question nor the common sense to see the utter absurdity of a layman dealing realistically with a subject of which nothing is really known.

In so obscuring the spiritual side of Ibsen, Mr Shaw achieved a great measure of success on his own lines. His aim to express real life, the actual world in which actual men and women are actually born, have their actual problems, actually die, brought him many admirers. Thus he captured a fairy godmother in Miss A. E. Horniman. He captured a disciple in Mr Granville Barker, who became a convert to his brand of socialism. He captured the Court Theatre, which, with Mr Barker's aid, he converted into a centre for the dissemination of Shaw-Fabianism. The Court Repertory

Theatre was a strange undertaking. In this so-called Repertory Theatre, instituted to exploit budding dramatists in the bourgeois drama business, 900 odd performances of 32 plays were given. Of these 900 odd performances, 701 were of plays by one author, Mr G. Bernard Shaw. The Court Theatre was really a Shaw-Spielhaus and its performance a Shaw-Festival extending over three years. Mr Shaw's amazing conquests have continued to the present day, his latest capture being the British music-hall public. The latter achievement proves that Mr Shaw as an advanced dramatist is dead; for though the music-hall is rising, it is not five minutes in advance of the times. He is no longer to be associated even with the group of writers for whom he has cleared a path, and to whom imagination and lyricism are unknown, who are realists but have no conception of reality, and who possess no other qualification for play-writing than a facile gift for employing the old Shaw-Euripidean method of debating and proving an unprovable thesis. He must now take his place with novelists turned dramatists, who find that it has become comparatively easy to get their scrappy undramatic productions transferred to the stage, and that, in the event of success, the theatre offers an enormous increase in their banking accounts.

Partly as a result of Mr Shaw's activities in the dramatic line came the spread of the Repertory Theatre movement, which, starting in London with Mr J. T. Grein's Independent Theatre, gave birth, in 1899, to the Stage Society. This propagandist organisation completed the dullness of the English Sunday. A year previous the Repertory Theatre seed

had journeyed to Ireland, where it became fertilised in the form of the Irish Literary Theatre, whose fairy godmother was Lady Gregory. The Celtic theatrical revival went off at a great pace. In spite of its delight in sexual curiosity, blessings poured upon it from all quarters. Here at last was a means to rescue the cultural crown of Ireland from neglect. But, alas ! the incompatibility of the Irish national temperament was against the permanent success of this promising attempt to unite Irishmen in the effort to organise the literature of Ireland in a dramatic form and to express the soul of Ireland in the past, present, and future. First came one split in the ranks, and Messrs Colin and Boyle seceded ; then another. The movement which began in hot haste seemed likely to end in hot words. Another seed of the movement went flying across England, and gave birth in turn to Miss Horniman's Manchester enterprise, to the admirable Glasgow Repertory Theatre, and to theatres of a more or less experimental character in Edinburgh, Stockport, and elsewhere.

A third seed of the Repertory Theatre movement flew to the Colonies, and Adelaide fertilised it. Thus the Adelaide Literary Theatre came into existence promoted by the enthusiasm of Mr Bryceson Treharne and the practical and artistic aid of many supporters whose service to the theatre and drama in Australia will doubtless prove to be inestimable. Starting with a small beginning, the Adelaide Literary Theatre is surely feeling its way towards a big development.

Meanwhile things were going with a great swing in England. Play, playgoers, debating and drama societies were crowding into existence with the alarming rapidity of patent

face-washes. London was becoming fearfully excited over the latest theatrical fad. Following the example of the Court Theatre, the Criterion, Adelphi, and other middle-aged and middle-classed highly respectable theatres, joined the propper-gander leagues, and promised to end their theatrical careers ardently in sympathy with plays written round preachers, prigs, and parasites. Then came a change. Gradually one attempt succumbed after another. The Court Theatre enterprise collapsed, and after a tour round the West End theatres its ghost made a final stand at the Duke of York's Theatre, largely aided by the benefactions of Mr J. M. Barrie. Here, for three months or so, it gave an exhibition of mental disease, fraud, self-assertion, superhuman wisdom, and malignity disguised as drama, and then took its departure, followed by great expectations. From the Little Theatre it passed to the Kingsway Theatre, where it now cuts a dramatic figure.

There is no need to go further into the question of the breakdown of the Repertory Theatre in London. Some of the causes have been indicated already. The cause affecting the Court Theatre branch may be found in the totally wrong conception of organising the theatre to exploit economic socialism. Scientifically considered, economic socialism embraces but a small district of the very wide area of social science ; and even though we admit that such a subject is entirely suited to dramatic treatment, it is impossible to deny that it is still far too narrow to be used effectively as an instrument for the establishment of drama in this country upon a great and permanent basis. The only effective instrument for this purpose is the cosmic theme—the theme that embraces



By courtesy of "L'Art Décoratif."

DESIGN FOR COSTUMES
BY M. DRÉSA.
(THÉÂTRE DES ARTS, PARIS.)

humanity as a whole and not in bits. The cosmic theme must be encouraged to enter the theatre ; and when it is permitted to do so, the cosmic dramatist will enter also. Such a dramatist will write with imagination and veracity under the guidance and control of a finely balanced, trained visual faculty.

The truth of the failure of the London Repertory Theatre is that its initiators and promoters have not organised the theatre to foster a drama of the theatre. Unless they re-organise themselves to do this, there is but little doubt that their movement will be totally wrecked. The drama that the theatre needs is a symbolic, social, and cosmic drama, not a drama of the debating-hall and dissecting-room. Such a drama will come as soon as we have reinterpreted Ibsen and have killed the fatal heresy that art is imitation. With the discovery that Ibsen is not a realist, nor a social reformer (he has pointed to the position of women, but suggests no possible reform), but an artist, a different state of affairs in the theatre will arise. It was Coleridge who said that every man is either an Aristotelian or a Platonist. He might have added that some men (the exceptional men) are both. Ibsen was both. To an extraordinary vision he added an extraordinary power of interpretation. His searching eye penetrated to the soul of a thing, and he put down unhesitatingly what he saw. Unlike Shaw, Brieux, Wedekind, and the rest, he did not stop to argue about the intuition in order to prove that what he saw was not a soul, but a syllogism. He knew that if his vision was right there was no need to prove it ; if it was wrong, all the argument in the world would not prove it right.

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tion of physical states results in a caricature of detached monstrosities, having no organic relation to each other, and dear only to the scientist turned dramatist who explains them categorically. But the vision and dramatic interpretation of soul states is different. Not only does it demand the exercise of the imagination of the artist, the revealer of an eternal truth, but it creates the need of a temple wherein the spirit of truth may be reverently unveiled, and where at the shrine of the inscrutable god the devout may enjoy the wonder of the unity of mysteries springing from and dedicated to the mystery.

The reinterpretation of Ibsen, then, will give birth to a drama which shall be a combination of mystic vision and interpretation, of Plato and Aristotle. The essence of this drama will be the strenuous assertion of vital personality with a recognition that man is governed by hereditary tendencies, subconsciousness, and mysticism. The characters will be symbols of the particular episode of the human soul which is being represented, as well as symbols of the underlying unity of life. The theatre will be the holy of holies, wherein the great dramatic mysteries in the life of the soul will be revealed.

The implication here is that we need in the theatre workers with psychic and artistic insight and knowledge. We need now in the repertory realists a gradual readjustment for the new work of the theatre. The latest addition to the provincial repertory theatres, the citizen-owned Liverpool Repertory Theatre, shows signs of this readjustment. This theatre contains several innovations coming from abroad, and it is a start at provincial theatres at which drama could be treated as art. The chances of the Liverpool theatre being





DESIGN FOR "LA NUIT PERSANE" BY DRÉSA. (THÉÂTRE DES ARTS.)
By courtesy of "L'Art Décoratif"

a definite contribution to the æsthetic theatre will depend largely not only on its power to follow Manchester and Glasgow and breed its own dramatists, but to see that it breeds the right sort of dramatist—the creators, not imitators.

Without this readjustment the London Repertory Theatre cannot possibly carry on its work on a wider scope. The real life which it imagines is the real life, and the finest medium for dramatic expression, will sicken and drop from its hand, and nothing will be left to it for representation. Then will come the final scene, the collecting of the pieces of this luckless movement and their sorrowful burial in the proposed National Theatre.

If this readjustment takes place there will be no National Theatre. The chief incentive towards its establishment will be gone. The National Theatre will no longer be necessary as an instrument for founding the drama firmly upon its present socialistic basis. It will cease to be the forlorn hope of the Shaw-Barker contemporary drama, just as Messrs Shaw and Barker will cease to be the spirits ruling its organisation. A new problem will have arisen, the problem of organising an efficient art theatre into existence, and beyond this a chain of art theatres. In order to solve this problem an experimental theatre is necessary. Till we have this theatre, and it tells us precisely where we are going, a National Theatre will be a piece of public idiocy. That is, unless it be established solely to suit the tastes of historians and archæologists. There is no great harm in having a National Gallery of Drama, even though disrespectful persons may be inclined to refer to it as a National Dusthole.

II

THE NEW SPIRIT IN PARIS

Bergson and the new intuition—The classical revival—The artistic movement in the theatre—Its origin and growth—Its influence on the Independents and plastic forms of art—Consequent decline of realism—Antoine and the literary theatre movement—The State Theatre, its difficulties and failure.

CROSSING to Paris, I was given a foretaste of the new spirit in La Ville Lumière. From Newhaven to Dieppe the sea spread like a waveless plain saturated with vaporous air. Trailing rhythmically across this green plain were soft amethyst columns of vibrating light that dipped far above and below into the sea-dissolved air and the air-dissolved sky, seeking infinity islanded by the vast world of consciousness. From Dieppe to Paris there were corresponding symbols of the rhythm and continuity of life. In the passing landscapes stained a faint green, in hills shouldering the pink and amber of the westering sky, in blossoming orchards shining like pink snow under the sinking sun, in newly fledged fields and vital waters vaporous with the fragrant stream of life ;—in all these were signs of creative evolution. Art is the symbol of infinity ; the new form of art is the perception and expression of continuity. The new intuition is the

apprehension of Reality underlying forms of life, of things living and evolving.

I found that three things fill the air in Paris more completely than any other with a prophecy of the forthcoming union of the lyric and the dramatic, and the adding of a new emotional value to life. These are¹ Bergson,² classic revivals,³ and the artistic movement in the theatre.

The intuitional philosophy of Bergson—a system of philosophy for elevating and making vision more penetratingly human—has so taken possession of Paris that the spirit of it seems to fill every place. I have heard it discussed when seated at the long glittering café that shoulders the perpetual mass of the magnificent Renaissance Opera House breasting the broad boulevards that flow away in leagues of rhythmical lustre. I have heard it mentioned in unaccustomed places in the “Quarter.” In this city of sex, at this shrine of the satisfaction of the senses, with its fretwork of open-air cafés carving vibrating pathways of fine gold, into which the mist of women, so graceful yet so graceless (“grâces au ciel!” as a Frenchman would say), seems to change and evaporate, men are everywhere busy, consciously or unconsciously, lifting the jewel of human vision out of the mire of logic.

The poets headed by Tristan Derème, the Yellow Syndicalists by Sorel, the literary critics by Rémy de Gourmont, above all, the Independants—who are invading and transforming the theatre—are actively expressing the new idea. Thus they are working in complete harmony with a system that exhibits a mistrust of big organisations yet a great trust of corporate life; which emphasises the belief that the in-

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dividual must be completely himself and be allowed at all times to be completely himself, yet must express that corporate life of which he is but a part ; which accordingly demands conscious intuition, clarity of suggestion, simple and direct expression, and withal a tremendous analysis, but not the analysis of academical logic. It aims rather to remove the sluice-house of such logic from the life-stream which flows through human beings—that hard mechanical check which continues human existence at the expense of the stream by damming its spontaneity and adulterating the purity of its elements,—and to substitute an emotional aid to continuity through which the stream shall pass freely and unadulterated without being exhausted in the process.

Thus the philosophical, artistic, and literary value of the intuitional idea of the assertion of personality and the death of dogmatism is being fully emphasised. As an instance of how the idea itself is being expressed in artistic aims and methods I may take the Paris production of *The Blue Bird*, the work of the Théâtre des Arts, and the Russian Ballets. The former is an expression of the intuitional movement ; and the peculiar beauty of the Moscow stage version of *The Blue Bird* is fed and nourished by the spirit which is vitalising everything, and giving even to the most opaque things a new significance. *The Blue Bird* arrived in Paris by way of London, after running for two years at the Artistic Theatre of Moscow. The Paris production was on the whole more artistic and more interesting than the London one. It was staged by the Moscow producers themselves, who, though unable to reproduce the original effects, managed very skil-



BAKST
1910

Costume de "NARCISSE"

DESIGN FOR THE
COSTUME OF NARCISSE
BY BAKST.

fully to suggest how beautiful those effects were. One very noticeable feature of the production was an attempt, conscious or otherwise, to apply the new Post-Expressionist principles of continuity (1) by lines all composed to suggest rhythmical movement, (2) by colour distribution to suggest movement, (3) by space suggesting infinity, (4) by light and atmosphere suggesting mystery. The search for rhythm and vibration and continuity was certainly remarkable. Rhythm and vibration were got by cloths and columns fretted with innumerable lines in such a way as to give them the appearance of circling and swaying. This rhythm was, in one "scene," caught up and repeated by the nicely related lines of the sweeping steps and the circular arches of the two rostrums down stage L. and R., as well as by the flowing draperies of the children. The Kingdom of the Future was, in fact, a very successful example of the application of rhythmic design to the "scene." Infinity was suggested by the frequent use of black fly-borders, black "wings," and black stage-cloths. A peculiarity of some of the scenes was that they were set right up stage, the front part of the stage being blacked out, and forming a frame to scenes seemingly carved out of infinity, and having no beginning or end.

Thus it was the partial application of the principles of continuity and rhythm, the fine feeling for vastness, infinity, and fantasy, and the very interesting costume designs, that distinguished the Moscow production at the Théâtre Rejane from the Haymarket production. Though the former was not completely successful, yet throughout it was fantastic, imaginative, living, and evolving. The scenery and dresses were artistically

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good, and the two children more convincing than those in London, who did not suggest figures in a fantasy. Again, though there was an attempt to apply certain traditional principles of unity, distribution of colour, space, light and shade to the Haymarket production, there was none of the systematic and complete application of the more revolutionary principles to be found in the Russian *Blue Bird*. Thus continuity and great simplicity marked the first scene, a typical Russian interior of rough grained timber. Here the low warm tones of the interior balanced the vibrating silver-blue exterior, and served admirably to carry out the decorator's telling figures. The lines, too, were well distributed, the window balancing the fireplace, the furniture, etc. Even the grains of woodwork contributed to the wonderful sense of movement. The lighting was cleverly worked from the centre of the stage. Indeed, the lighting effects throughout were extremely ingenious, though ruined by obsolete contrivances. Rhythm and vibrating atmosphere were very cleverly got in the second scene by means of a vast golden backcloth fretted with revolving lines. The Palace of the Fairy, which with its fine colour scheme of yellow and red, and a black and gold profile flight of steps, against which the coloured figures moved, made the Haymarket scene insipid by comparison. It was a favourite idea of the decorator to move his figures against a black and gold background. A similar attempt to get rhythm was also discernible in the fretted and swaying towering columns of the very imaginative Kingdom of the Future, where also an interesting mystical effect was obtained by the use of a gauze lowered on the footlights. This scene,



COSTUME FOR "LE CHAGRIN DANS LE PALAIS DE HAN" BY RENÉ PIOT. (THÉÂTRE DES ARTS.)
By courtesy of "L'Art Décoratif."

with its air of glittering mystery, its curving vaults, its wonderful suggestions of space and infinity, was exquisite. The balancing of colour was not so successful. Apparently the decorator occasionally misses colour. For this reason a great deal of the interest of a very wonderful scene was lost. *Devant le Rideau*, as it is called, was a magnificent flat composition on a backcloth, consisting of a simple outline drawing of a castle with a vast flight of steps. On either side of the pale bluish stonework was a large, flat, wash-green sky, with parallel arms of crimson gold to relieve it. Placed on the lowest step of the castle were a number of figures dressed in colour. But the colours were not pure, and did not balance the rest of the composition. The same fault was noticeable in all the colour arrangements. One colour, red, alone stood out clear and full. It killed the other colours.

For the rest, the Land of Memory opened very well with a mysterious blue atmosphere obtained by lowering a gauze with foliage painted on it, out of which the simple cottage, with its angular roof, and the figures of the old people gradually emerged and into which they faded again. But the scene when fully lighted tended to be cheap ; it was neutral and characterless. The cemetery was very simply treated : just a church front in the centre, and the graves with crosses outlined in black and gold on either side, against a quiet blue sky hung with golden stars, changing suddenly to a big design of lilies. The decorator's favourite black-and-gold wall reappeared for the coloured figures to orchestrate themselves against it. The Garden of Happiness, replacing the Forest Scene, introduced us to Puvis de Chavannes in a very charm-

ing scene delicately and decoratively treated. There was a tendency, however, to overload it with classical draped Happinesses, reclining on soft green banks or moving rhythmically beneath a broad mass of golden foliage that harboured the faint blue sky and architectural landscapes. So in the end it lost in bigness. It should be composed throughout in simple masses, as Puvis de Chavannes would do it. It will be gathered that the whole production was interesting in spite of the fact that it had been adapted to a stage apparently too large for it, and was served by the usual defective machinery. In its way it was a triumph of the personalities of the decorator and producer. It revealed, too, that Maeterlinck's full emotional value of suggestion was not obtained in London, and it left one with a fine impression of the emotional value which may be given to plays of all kinds, the possibilities of which are neither felt nor understood in England.

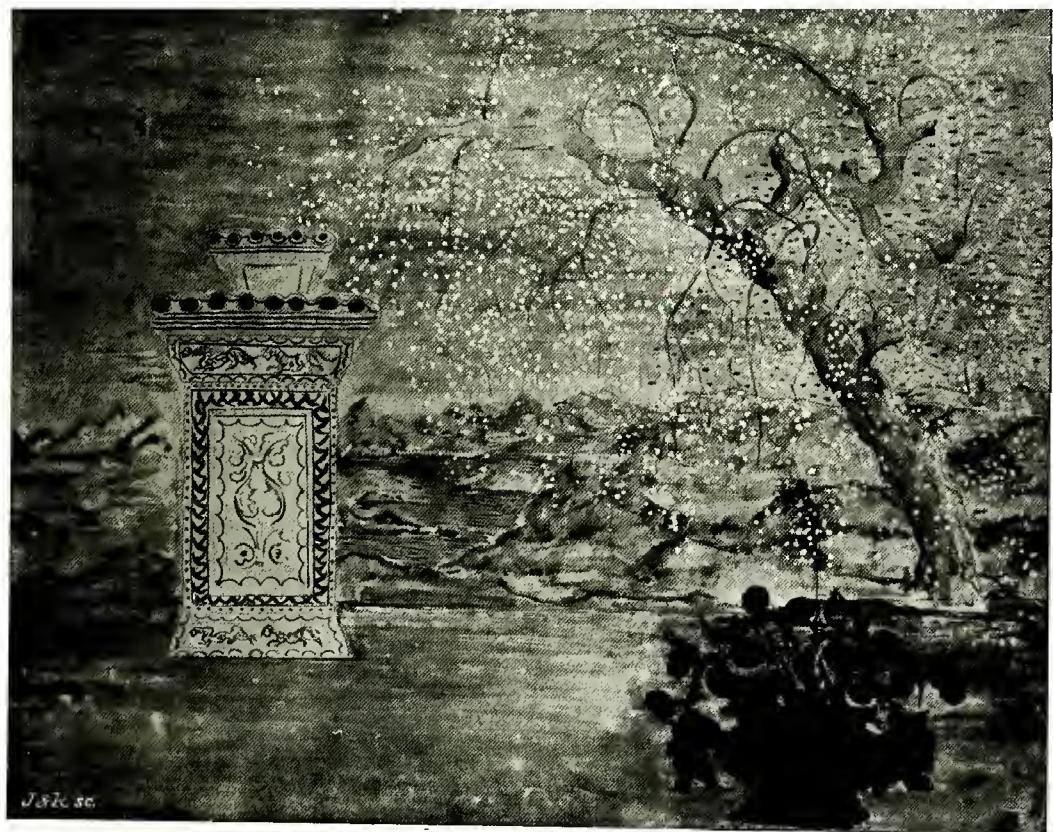
The new artistic movement in the theatre which *The Blue Bird* is carrying to various countries is finding further expression at the Théâtre des Arts, under the distinguished direction of M. Jacques Rouché. M. Rouché, who is making an exceedingly valuable contribution to the movement, is concerned not with the reform of the housing of the drama, but with the artistic reform of the scene. In his view the "scene" needs rejuvenating. It must be readjusted according to the new ideas of painters, designers, and other artists. The æsthetics of the "scene" should, in fact, correspond with the most advanced æsthetic ideas. Working according to this view, M. Rouché made an investigation into the æsthetic reform of the theatre in Europe. He collected a number of

propagandist works, and distilled the main ideas therefrom, and put the result in that excellent brief illustrated volume, *L'Art théâtral moderne*. He followed this by securing one of the old traditional theatres of Paris for the purpose of applying these revolutionary principles of the art of the theatre. The principles by which M. Rouché is guided, and as stated in his book, are briefly as follows. Everything in the "scene" is to be simplified and unified, and this largely by the aid of decorative line and colour. Thus, decoration is to play an essential part in unifying the action, in imparting individuality to the environment, in expressing the mood created by the artist. It is, in short, to give the widest expression to the character of the "scene," and to shape it by binding it together in one big rhythmic design. Beyond this, style is to be sought and obtained by a study of rhythm and plastic effects, archaeological details are to be avoided, the essentials of the "scene" are to harmonise, the characters are to be brought into proper relation with each other and the accessories, while whatever retards the action is to be excluded. The "scene" is, in fact, to be a moving relief in the modern style. Lastly, the production of the "scene," or entire play, is to be carried out under the supervision of one artist, who will direct and control the execution of the work designed by himself, and attend the rehearsals for the purpose. By such means individuality and beauty are to be attained.

M. Rouché's experiment is a tremendously interesting one ; and even though he has not yet arrived at anything very closely approaching what one can imagine the ideal scene to be, and this owing to the lack of suitable material for treat-

ment, he is well on the way. Secondly, his desire to promote a very live movement in painting in Paris is having the desirable effect of turning the most vigorous artistic minds in the direction of the theatre. Thus he has opened an avenue to the rapid development of the picture-stage, and in so doing has already pressed a distinguished group of Independants, including De Segonzac, Bakst, Maurice Denis, Vuillard, Dethomas, Dresa, Piot, and Delaw, into the artistic service of the playhouse.

The present artistic work of the Théâtre des Arts, besides being initiated by M. Rouché's investigation, has been largely influenced by the Russian Ballets. These ballets recently appeared in Paris at the Châtelet, under the direction of M. Astruc. Here they obtained a fuller understanding and more artistic expression in stage treatment than in London. The lighting, for one thing, was better, thus adding greater value to the wonderful colour compositions. Again, the ballets were given entire, and not in bits sandwiched between out-of-date operas, as at Covent Garden. Then, again, the moods of the great ballets, like M. Bakst's masterpieces, *Schéhérazade* and *Cléopâtre*, were left undisturbed. It was possible to feel the gorgeous voluptuousness of *Schéhérazade* as conceived by the decorator and expressed by him in every detail: in the whirling sensuous colours, green, blue, orange, and red, and their wonderful gradations, in the flowing embracing lines, in the sensuous movements dressed by Bakst, whose aim it is to dress a movement, not a mannequin, as a writer once said in *L'Art décoratif*, one of the foremost art publications in Paris. The music of this ballet is signed by



SCENE FROM "CHAGRIN DANS LE PALAIS DE HAN" BY RENÉ PIOT. (THÉÂTRE DES ARTS.)
By courtesy of "L'Art Décoratif."

Rimsky-Korsakoff. It is extremely beautiful, and possesses the expressive and harmonising character essential to *Schéhérazade*. In short, the music, the decoration, the dancing, the whole atmosphere, were so wonderful in Paris that one could not enjoy a French performance after that, while the Paris representations left me exceedingly dissatisfied with the London ones. As an instance of the sensation derived from the former, I may mention the production of *Narcisse*. This ballet, the creation of M. Bakst, was, like *Sadko*, entirely the composition of the new Russian school, and stamped with nationality. Its keynote was indecision. There was throughout in the music of M. Tchérénine, as elsewhere, the spirit of the good-looking *Narcisse* coquetting with his reflected image, and the unsuccessful efforts of Echo to capture his infatuation. This indecision was caught up and expressed in the long trailing foliage of a grove of the Gods, slowly stirring in a dark-green sea of heavy peacefulness, and silently torn to threads by uncertainty instead of forming big masses and rhythmical shapes expressive of the ordered mind. The earliest arrivals in the music and the scene were the wild decorative Bœotians disporting with rather heavy heart and tread in the strange green twilight. Then succeeded the love motives, and the woodland scene marked the rhythm vividly of the whirling lines and the maze of colour of the Bacchantes. These seemed now to flutter like brilliant butterflies upon the soft flight of foliage, now to touch the stooping trees with drifting fire as they passed swiftly beneath them. Then *Narcisse* was changed into a flower—a really dreadful property flower that disgraced the production ; Echo became a rock. Once

more the Bœotian motive, and the wild creatures patterned the amber sunset with fantastical shapes, and in the green gloom of that grove of the Gods one felt Vanity kissing a Shadow.

And as an instance of the introduction of innovations making it possible to estimate more fully the range and variety of these ballets, I may refer to the use in Paris of two amazing tableau curtains. One was by M. Roehrich illuminating the "Bataille de Keryenectz," a symphonic fragment by Rimsky-Korsakoff. The composition of the music and of the curtain was completely harmonious. There was but one immense simple design and movement of the two ; the spasmodic, jagged, conflicting passages of the one being repeated in the feverish, resisting lines and intensely dramatic colours of the other. The fight rages from beginning to end. Here is a new way of getting rid of the silly tableau scenes and crowds of stupid supers at our West End theatres. The second curtain, of which I could find no particulars, apparently symbolised the return. It was full of the stillness after a battle. The mystic tongue of flame running through the entire composition of music and decoration, as though to beacon the home-coming warriors, the restful lines of the incoming vessel on the pale green sea, and those of the narrow gorge formed by the castle and rocks, suggested peaceful motives and the Eastern mood. It was a Persian ballad visualised.

A further illustration of the innovations in artistic methods of presentation which are being promoted by M. Astruc may be found in a consideration of the highly artistic



SCENE FROM "CHAGRIN DANS LE PALAIS DE HAN" BY RENÉ PIOT. (THÉÂTRE DES ARTS.)
By courtesy of "L'Art Décoratif."

but inconclusive production of a mystery play, D'Annunzio's *Le Martyré de Sébastien*. This piece, presented at the Châtelet, though entirely successful in one direction, was a failure in another. The whole performance was very consistent and harmonious from the poet's point of view. Debussy's decorative and indefinably charming music, Bakst's decorations, the admirable acting of Ida Rubenstein, all combined to reproduce D'Annunzio himself. But the poet's conception of St Sébastien was wrong. The character was bloodless and effeminate. It was played by a woman. All the lines were flowing, suggesting effeminacy, whereas they should have been lines of resistance. The fact is, the poet had not the strength of the artist. D'Annunzio sees life in sickly mauves, Debussy in sage greens, while Bakst sees it in virile reds and blues. D'Annunzio is fascinated by beauty, and expresses himself in Hogarth's line of beauty ; Bakst searches for truth and selects resistant lines, suggesting the underlying continuity and reality of things. The wonderful thing was the manner in which Bakst managed to express D'Annunzio's lines. His own conception of St Sébastien would doubtless have been that of Botticelli, in which the drawing is so strong, and all the lines suggest the soldier and resistance. As it is, the head of the crucified saint in the play is that of D'Annunzio himself, not of St Sébastien. A noticeable feature of the production was the three drop-curtains designed by Bakst, to form, as it were, Wagnerian overtures, each leading to the next scenes. One curtain, for instance, was covered with silver arrows on a black ground, and with innumerable little points that stabbed just as arrows do when they strike,—the whole suggesting

the coming martyrdom. These arrows were repeated in the costume of St Sebastien.

To the artist the importance of the work of MM. Rouché and Astruc is considerable. It has, beyond the effect already noted of inspiring artists to serve the theatre, that of inspiring new ideas in the artist outside the theatre. There appeared, for example, not long ago, at the Grafton Galleries, London, a canvas by Miss Estelle Rice, painted as a direct result of the influence of M. Bakst's *Cléopâtre*, and the only thing of real importance done, at the time, from the Russian Ballets. It had certainly caught the tremendously vital spirit of the ballet in a remarkable degree. Another study of equal importance by Georges Banks, appeared at the Autumn Salon. It was a suggestion for the revised version of a setting used at the Théâtre des Arts. Besides showing how much the "scene" is beginning to appeal to the eye, it revealed how an original mind may take an existing artistic scene, and by readapting it, while preserving the essentials of it, discover a new individuality in a new dress. A further testimony to the power of the artistic scene to quicken the ideas of the artist is contained in a book of six exquisite designs by Paul Iribe, inspired by the fluid movements of Nijinsky.

The artistic movement in the theatre in Paris has been reproached with being unjust to the claims of certain directors of the French theatre who have also done something in the past to reform the "scene" and scenic decoration. It is said to obscure the work of certain pioneers in this direction, among them M. Antoine. But this is hardly the case, for M. Antoine's claims upon our attention rest not so much



STUDY OF NIJINSKI
BY PAUL IRIBE.

upon his service to the scene as upon his remarkable talents as a producer, his valuable contribution to the literary theatre movement and to the reform of acting, as well as upon the fact that he has made the Odéon a medium for influencing the educational, cultural, and cosmopolitan section of Paris centralised by the Sorbonne.

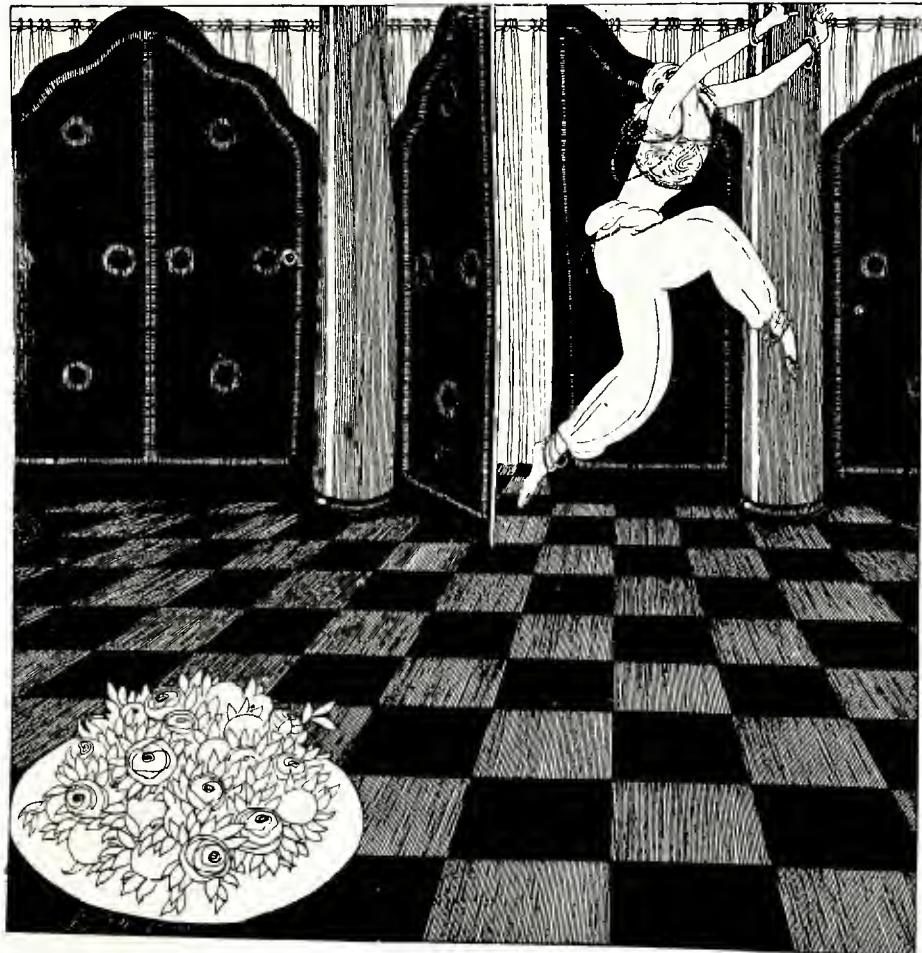
It may be of interest here to consider M. Antoine's connection with the Literary Theatre, and with the Odéon. The first is practically a summary of the rise and decline of the modern realistic movement in the French theatre, and of an artistic movement which has been running parallel with it.

It will be remembered that, twenty years ago, Paris was invited to the bewildering spectacle of a sudden activity in the theatre. At this moment *Le Théâtre Libre* was born ; Antoine sprang into existence as one transfigured in the light of an apostle of the new spirit in the theatre, foreshadowing the new acting. His activities at the time were phenomenal. He made his last call, so to speak, over a wide literary field, and writers like Tolstoi, Zola, Lavedan, Paul Marguerite, the Goncourts responded. Side by side with Antoine inaugurating a new art of acting came Henri Rivière inventing a new decoration and seeking to reform mechanical appliances. He is followed by Paul Fort, with his theatre of art dedicated to the poets and open to the world, equally to Shelley, Maeterlinck, Verlaine, and Charles Van Lerberghe, and served by such artists as Maurice Denis, Vuillard, and Bonnard, thus aiming to establish a kind of *entente cordiale de théâtre*. Then comes Lugné-Poë, another high priest of the artistic drama, and *L'Œuvre* is founded. So for ten years goes on

the attempt to realise Wagner's dream of a fusion of the three forms of art—colour, movement, sound.

Meanwhile a new dramaturgy was developing elsewhere. In Scandinavia, Russia, Poland, and Germany the Idea had become paramount, initiating a change of motives, a different technique, and introducing an atmosphere hitherto foreign to the theatre. Paris, "La Ville Lumière," the centre of intellectual civilisation, was not long in seizing and applying the strange theories, and philosophical discursions and discussions and plays without action became the fashion. Thus it repeated the common story of the attempt to actualise life and to defraud the theatre of its birthright of illusion. Its Donnay, Porto-Riche, Bernstein, and Brieux invaded the theatre, and, under the cloak of disillusion, preached the hopeless gospel of opportunism, confirmed pessimism, contracted egoism, sophistry, and what not. Under the cloak of humanity they strewed the stage with social disease, neuropaths, neurotics, neurasthenics, and devoted their lives and talents to the exploitation of the physical and hysterical. In the pursuit of truth they expressed the commonplace and the common herd, like Strauss, who can find no more exalted theme than the events in a day of domestic life, utilising his highly developed technique to express the squalling of an infant or the falling of a book.

Nietzsche says somewhere men should go beyond themselves. These men do not go beyond themselves. Prostituting their fine energies in the attempt to express a gross travesty of so-called real life, they have never gone beyond their audience. In their savage outbursts against the hollow-



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ness of individuals and society, in the protest against the dull density and Philistinism of the human mind, they have simply written to please the mob—sensation-mongers that delight in ravings and ask to be shown society extended in the Morgue. They have never adopted the spirit of detachment of those who write to please themselves—the spirit which alone permits the writer to be himself and yet to go beyond himself. Such a spirit is manifest in the work of Ibsen.

Though pessimism is not a new thing in French drama and literature, the new side of pessimism was not likely to prevail with a race given on the whole to a light-hearted and light-minded optimism, and accustomed to demand light and air. Its creed had one serious defect from the point of view of a Frenchman—monotony and melancholy. Monotony is the most melancholy thing in the world to a Frenchman.

Monotony and the new development of the Cinema-drama, according to which the most prominent French artists are appearing as moving-picture actors, has hastened the end of realism, and to-day the attempt to decorate the theatre with a shield bearing a weird device of whelk-shells and shallows, of fig leaves and devil gules, as though tracing its descent from Monsieur le Teufel and the Fall, is regarded as amusing but negligible. The cultured Frenchman is in revolt against the sombre and single conception of life. He begins to recognise that the theatre has a finer purpose than the representation of empty sadness. He even recognises that it should be put to the nobler uses already indicated in these pages. In his view the dramatist of still-life must go, and be replaced by the dramatist of the evolving soul. He asks

for the author with the apostolic mission who shall voice the great eternal harmonies, for a temple wherein they shall be fully expressed.

If he desires to put an end to the manufacture of dross, he is fortunately in a position to do so. For Paris has throughout preserved the seeds of artistic salvation in artistic impulses running parallel with the realistic. So when her authors have come to terms with themselves, when extraordinary writers like Claudel abandon the extreme and unplayable mysticism of *L'Arbre*, when others like Edouard Schuré have fully settled their notions of "le Théâtre de l'âme," a drama and theatre dedicated to mysticism and fulfilling the essential conditions of illumination will arise. For the moment, then, the theatre is passing through an interesting period of transition.

With regard to M. Antoine's work and influence the following facts were obtained in conversation at the Odéon. M. Antoine first began as an employé of a Paris Gas Company, during which time he took an active interest in the drama. Becoming director of the Théâtre Antoine, he inaugurated certain reforms with so much success that the State was led to offer him the Odéon rent-free, together with an annual subsidy of 100,000 francs. But it must be clearly understood that, though the Odéon is State-aided, it is nevertheless a private company, with Antoine at its head. Whatever profit is made goes to the benefit of the company, and does not affect the amount of the State subsidy. The company has, however, to meet the State on certain points—which it finds quite reasonable—with regard to the price of seats, the

number of plays produced, and so on. Still, the Odéon has none of the tyrannies and sterilising limitations of the State theatre system found, for instance, at the Opéra, and of the shareholder and subscription system found at the Covent Garden Theatre, London. It has season-ticket holders, but they have no voice in the choice of programmes. The *abonnées* of the Opéra not only have this voice, but exercise it to a disastrous degree. The Odéon *abonnées* are allowed a great reduction on a series of representations. Thus a stall for twelve performances costs a third the usual price. There are also many privileges attached to the theatre shared alike by authors, actors, and staff.

The important point is that during the time Antoine has been at the Odéon he has not been hampered by the State. He has been allowed a free hand to continue his policy of encouraging young authors and promoting certain reforms. When he went to the Odéon he at once began to make the best of his means. He banished the old declamatory and Sarah Bernhardt grand style of acting, replacing it with the new or natural style favoured by Duse and Mrs Patrick Campbell, according to which actors talk and act as they might do if acting in a private room instead of in a theatre. He wisely exercised his prerogative of producing a number of new plays each year, thus rescuing more than one author of note from possible neglect. He also manifested a wise choice in the selection of classical plays, which were interpreted on the new lines. Beyond this he has, both directly and indirectly, brought a wealth of French literature in a new and dramatic way to the imagination and understanding of the Sorbonne

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student. But he has done all this, working on the lines of a one-man organisation, which is not to be compared with the proposed National Theatre organisation in England.

In the course of the aforementioned conversation certain obstacles to the establishment of a National Theatre in London were suggested. Among these, the drama in England is dominated by the commercial spirit. The theatre is also dominated by the actor-manager spirit. The endowed system excludes competition and personal enterprise. All the advanced work in Europe is being done by new and independent workers. If the subsidy system works comparatively well in France and Germany, it is mainly because it is an old-established affair. The *Comédie Française* was organised eighty years ago, and it has bred a line of efficient directors. The English director has yet to be born. But if the Continental system of State theatre subsidy has this advantage, and moreover serves to promote a public taste for the classics and the development and study of theatre architecture, it has further serious disadvantages, to be found, for example, in the working of the Paris Opera House. The Opera House does not pay ; it never has paid. From the first it has been in difficulties, and this in spite of a huge subsidy. It receives 800,000 francs a year from the State for 194 performances which it is bound to give. Each performance costs 16,600 francs, including everything. The total cost of 194 performances is 3,220,400 francs. This amount, less the subsidy, is 2,420,400 francs. To cover this are the receipts from 2200 seats. Against this are the working expenses, the endless privileges to all sorts and conditions of outsider and spectator,



By courtesy of "L'Art Décoratif."

DESIGN FOR FIRST ACT OF
"LA NUIT PERSANE" BY M. DRÉSSÉ.
(THÉÂTRE DES ARTS, PARIS.)

and those summed up in the free list and cheap list. Besides this, there are the tyrannies of the subscribers. Then there is the field of possible corruption, much too wide to be dealt with here. One form of corruption may be indicated. If, say, I am making a thousand a year out of my operas, might it not be worth my while to have as many more operas produced as possible? And I might therefore say to the director, "You produce my opera, and I will pay you a handsome commission." And the director might see his way to accept my commission without compromising with his conscience. Further, enormous difficulties with which such an organisation as the Paris Opera House has to contend present themselves in the various demands of the directors, the artistes, the authors, the enormous mass of other people who are directly or indirectly concerned, and the season-ticket holders, who, if they do not get what they require at once, refuse to renew their tickets. I propose to deal fully in another place with the facts and figures of the State subsidy and endowed systems. Such facts and figures will afford no evidence in support of the experiment of establishing an endowed National Theatre in England ; at least, not on the lines laid down by the present committee. On the contrary, they will prove that such an undertaking can only be a waste of time and money.

III

THE NEW SPIRIT IN BERLIN

Reinhardtism—Its principles and methods of application—The interpretation and re-interpretation of Ibsen—The Deutsches Theatre equipment and widespread influence—The Secessionists and the theatre—The decline of realism—The classic renascence—The Fortuny system of lighting—Civic form of art in Berlin.

FOR the sake of convenience, we speak of new movements; but, as I have said, no movement rightly considered is new. The treatment may be new, and the age both new and good for the treatment. This, for example, is a new age of movement—transition is the word used. The fact has been apparent for some time, but it remained for Berlin to hurl it once more at me. Berlin is moving in two directions at once—the right and the wrong. The impressions created by Berlin are of two classes—art and civics, or Reinhardtism and “New Republicism.” On the theatre and drama side Berlin has formed an attachment to art which promises it a surer slice of immortality than its present form of city-development and embellishment. Both the drama and the theatre are in a state of transition. The drama always was, and will be, in a state of transition. The theatre is waking up, perhaps for the first time in its history, and begins to follow the drama. The law of necessity may

emphasise the present phase, and cause it to appear singular and intense ; but none the less the drama has passed through many phases of evolution, some of which have had nothing to accentuate them. Many persons are accustomed to think of the drama as though it does not evolve. To them there is little or no difference between its fairly primitive Greek and its later developed forms. To them the dramatic form reached its climax long ago, just as the poetical form is said to have culminated with Keats and the novel with Meredith or James ; and nothing would convince them that, so far from this being the case, we are about to assist at the birth of the most perfect and most simple yet complex form of drama the world has yet seen. Such persons—their name is legion, and many of them sit in high dramatic places—fail to understand that to drama, as to other forms of expression, evolution is life. Either the drama must go on evolving or cease to exist. The fact is understood in Germany, and it is generally felt by progressive directors that the evolution must be in a new direction. Thus there has arisen a decided movement towards the introduction of æsthetic elements in the drama and the complete synthesis of the three forms of expression—drama, music, and decoration.

The first point of identification of the transitional movement may be traced in the construction of the theatre or the frame. Along with the theatre development goes the application of progressive ideas of the relation of scenery to the drama. In Germany—and indeed everywhere upon the Continent—the question how the drama shall be housed and staged in the most efficient and artistic manner is foremost. It is not

uncommon to find even small touring companies trying to solve the fundamental principle of simplicity by the use of the portable synthetic scene, consisting of reversible screens capable of being adapted to a variety of scenes. These came originally from Japan, and have been in use on the Continent a number of years. In Berlin, Professor Max Reinhardt has set the fashion of putting decoration at the service of the drama.

Dramatically speaking, Professor Reinhardt rules Berlin. The spirit of Reinhardtism to-day—not to be confused with that of, say, ten years ago—is to be found to a greater or less extent in nearly all the theatres and productions. His present position may be said to be the logical development of his early aim and ambition. There is no need to enter here upon an account of this development. Apparently his ambition as a force in the theatre is, and always has been, to re-theatralise the theatre ; while his aim as a producer is to re-dramatise the drama ; to obtain the essence of drama and intimacy. Thus he seeks first to extract the spirit of drama from each play that he handles, and thereafter so to saturate the spectator with this spirit as to make it a part of his existence for the time being. The pursuit of the intimacy idea has carried Professor Reinhardt through a long series of productions and many playhouses. It has transported him from the humble “*Brielle*” to the *Deutsches Theatre* and *London Olympia* ; from the quips of mere “*sing-songs*” to the logical development in that vast mimodrama, *The Miracle*, and the still further development in *Edipus*. Thus, having passed beyond the modern realistic drama, which is now useless as a scaffolding



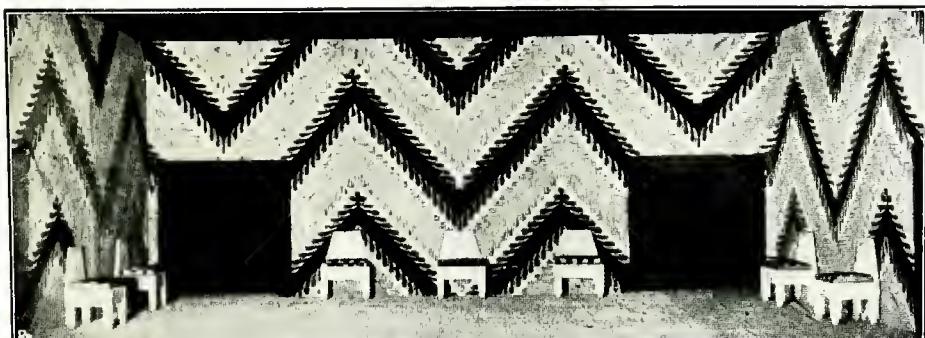
"MRS. WARREN'S PROFESSION," ACT III.
(Théâtre des Arts, Paris.)

to accommodate his unprecedented bigness and lavishness of realistic-symbolic treatment, and being, as he confesses, without suitable new plays, he is turning over the store of classics, from the earliest Greek times to the present, for fresh materials with which to establish his "theatre of the five thousand," wherein the intimacy idea may be exploited to the utmost degree.

His methods of obtaining intimacy may be considered under two heads—the treatment of the drama and its setting and the treatment of the audience. What appears to influence Max Reinhardt in his selection of plays is the possibility of the comedy festival-spirit and of drama. He makes for dramatic character, situation, unity of dramatic action. He has no particular reverence for the original form of a classic, whether *Edipus*, *The Oresteia*, *La Belle Hélène*, *Orphée aux Enfers* or Gozzi's *Turandot*. He instinctively sees the present essential form, and makes sweeping cuts and alterations to suit his purpose—that of concentrating everything around the dramatic action. In fact, he uses his material for composing the dramatic-song just as Hans Sachs used his for the master-song. Thus his recipe for making the dramatic extract is composed of characterisation, archæological inexactitudes, simplicity, synthesis, and naturalness. He takes a play, avoids all literary tradition, intuitively perceives its character, lops away superfluities, obliterates useless traditions, boils it down, obtains the desired dramatic form, and enriches it with the kaleidoscopic elements of actual life. Likewise he reduces the setting to corresponding artistic dimensions, eliminates unessentials, and binds it together with the three harmonies

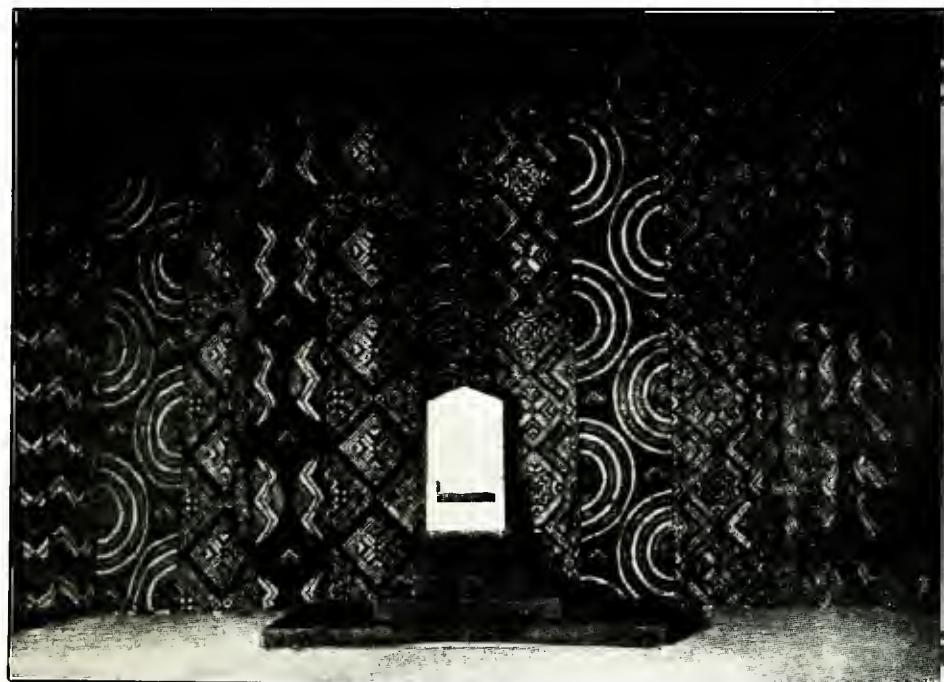
of colour, sound, and movement. So actuality, added to suggestion, is the keynote of the Reinhardt "scene." If the walls of a scene are solid, if the properties are as real as stage properties can be, if the heavens are convincing, if the doors, windows, walls, floors, trees, and earth beneath them are actual, they still leave something to the imagination. There is no ostentatious scenery, no disturbing details. The walls are simple, painted in one tone, they sweep to the edges of the proscenium frame and beyond them. The properties are designed to suggest their essential use. The sky is wide open, or a mere slit against white or coloured walls seen in perspective. One or two tall trees will outline themselves against an immense horizon, while a simple stretch of velvet grass will be enshrouded in the wonder of soft moonlight. The desired effect, whether charmingly fantastic or weirdly dramatic, is attained by the employment of four modern innovations, namely, the revolving stage, the round or concave horizon formed by a white concrete wall enveloping the stage, the new system of horizon and centre-stage lighting, and the use of a stage entirely cleared of conventional canvas scenery. The first offers a solution to the problem of quick changes, expeditious handling of scenes, and act-division. The second adds appropriate perspective. The third brings the back of the stage into line with the front, and reduces the old harsh effects of footlights and sidelights. It may be noted that the lighting effects are attained by the use of up-to-date electrical appliances distributed all over the theatre wherever they will enable the producer to emphasise the desired impression.

Professor Reinhardt's attempts to bring the audience into



By courtesy of Eric Reiss, Berlin.

DESIGN BY CARL CZECHKA FOR THE INTERIOR OF CORNWALL'S HOUSE IN "KING LEAR."



By courtesy of Eric Reiss, Berlin.

DESIGN BY CARL CZECHKA FOR THE FIRST SCENE OF "KING LEAR."

the action of the play recall endless conventional devices, and really illustrate the history of the search for intimacy on the classic stage, passing in turn from Greek and Chinese drama, Miracles, Mysteries, Moralities, to Italian and Elizabethan plays. Thus there are the devices from Athens as used in the production of Sophocles' *Edipus* and Euripides' *Orestes*, of the Greek circus and the audience forming part of the "crowd," and of overwhelming vastness, vast doors and spaces, and a certain nobility of line, but divorced from the wonderful open-air effects of great bursts of light and shade. There are the devices from Tokio of the revolving stage lending itself to novel effects, rapid change of locality, and endless possibilities, and of the actors passing through the auditorium as though coming from a distance. There is the Boccaccio-Hans Sach's device of intimacy. Professor Reinhardt's search for realism shows a remarkable agreement in details with that of Boccaccio and Sachs. His productions reveal the Sachs-like treatment of the *Decameron* in the omission of the obscene and the retention of the extremely realistic. But his situations are more highly coloured than those of Sachs, and here and there border on the highly sensational. For example, the bedroom scene between Helen and Paris in the second act of Offenbach's *Die Schöne Helene*, produced at the Künstler Theatre, Munich, was the most daring thing I have seen. The two characters were practically stripped and bedded for several minutes in complete silence, while Menelaus was slowly making his entrance from the back of the auditorium. The mood of sensuality was overpowering. The aim of Hans Sachs was to obtain a humorous realistic or life-like expression. His stage directions

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The poem appears to have afforded Goethe the finest opportunity of recording a sixty years' career—an opportunity which he was not slow to accept. He poured into it practically all his experience from the astronomical beginning to the sociological end and back again. In short, it is unequalled as a record of an author using his æsthetic instincts to mould scientific opinions which he immediately buries beyond discovery in German metaphysical soil. Goethe put everything into *Faust* II., except drama. He neglected, indeed, the unity and continuity of action so essential to the life of drama.

Whether Professor Reinhardt has ever set out to discover the unifying thread or psychological line of *Faust* does not appear. In his production of *Faust* he certainly is not concerned with tracking down the life-line of a soul placed in a world of accumulating experiences and attempting to weave it into coherence by means of music, setting, and acting, even supposing it were possible to do so in order to make a satisfactory drama. His concern is with making the whole thing as compact and dramatic as possible, with exhibiting his undoubted skill in stagecraftsmanship, and with giving a public in love with sensation and spectacle a choice of the kaleidoscopic scenes of which the poem is full. There are far too many of these scenes worth preserving for the sake of realism to make the rescue of the essential spiritual action a necessity. The masquerade at the Imperial Palace, the episode of Philemon and Baucis, the Helena magical intermezzo, the Walpurgis Night and zoological chorus, the Beatification—with its female penitents, holy anchorites, angelic hosts balanced on one another's shoulders like acrobats—all these

fearful and wonderful things are capable of popular interpretation, even though they do not contribute to an artistic representation according to the newest ideas. The question Professor Reinhardt has really set himself to answer is : Given my efficiently equipped stage and the end of *Faust*, how am I to make them fit ? His first solution was the presentation of the whole poem in a highly diluted form in eight hours. Eight solid hours of German rhymed metaphysics ! It sounds appalling. In order to soften the blow, he introduced a long interval for refreshments. Later it was decided to cut the performance down to six hours, where it now remains, interval included. The clever staging even in this abbreviated form is well worth consideration.

The stage on which the piece is presented at the Deutsches Theatre is worked on the Shakespearean principle. It is divided into three parts, of which the first or front stage is formed by covering up the orchestra and taking in a tier of boxes on either side. This stage, which is very shallow and is mostly employed for exteriors, is divided from the original stage by the drop curtain and from the audience by a second proscenium and a second drop curtain. The second or middle stage is the front portion of the ordinary stage ; while the third or back stage is formed by the revolving stage. The front stage is fitted with a rostrum which is used for exterior and interior purposes, while the boxes on either side represent the immovable portal or frame in use at other Continental theatres. When this stage is in use the actors make their entry through the stage boxes on either side. A noticeable feature of this arrangement is that it joins the stage

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neglected the fact ; or he may have felt his plays were so perfectly constructed as to dispense with any other background save one to be selected haphazard for the sake of time and place. In any case, his neglect or oversight has had its reward. The custom of presenting his plays in conventional sets has grown to such an extent that to-day it has become impossible to see Ibsen for the furniture. And the evolution of tortured souls amid household pots and pans goes merrily on. How far the Ibsen scene has been made a depository for second-hand furniture was redemonstrated to me at the performance of *Rosmersholm* at the Lessing Theatre, where the reform of acting and the entire neglect of the setting have been the chief aims. That the acting of Emanuel Reicher as Rosmer, Irene Triesch as Rebecca, Hans Marr as Kroll, was far above the English average, and the compactness of the whole performance was remarkable, does not matter. Throughout the performance the characters were so mixed up with the commonplace furniture that they entirely ceased to have effect.

The incongruities of the conventional treatment of the Ibsen "scene" are so appalling that it would be far better to play Ibsen without scenery if Ibsen had not made it well-nigh impossible to do so. In bringing his technique to such perfection he bound his plays so tightly as seriously to constrict the action, which, in order to become wholly intelligible at a single sitting, requires to be carefully loosened by the aid of supplementary music and setting. But such setting must only be employed to assist intensity, direction, and concentration, not to weaken or destroy them.



By courtesy of Eric Reiss, Berlin.

DESIGN BY EMIL ORLITS FOR THE SLEEPING-CHAMBER OF THE OLD ROBBER
IN SCHILLER'S "THE ROBBER."



GOETHE'S "FAUST," II.: THE ENTRANCE TO MENELAUS' PALACE.
PRODUCED AT COLOGNE MUNICIPAL THEATRE.

An attempt to loosen the action was recently made by playing a certain piece very slowly ; and Ibsen has been decorated symbolically by artists, notably Mr Gordon Craig, though not successfully. In designing scenery for Ibsen's later psychological dramas—all his dramas are more or less psychological in spite of Mr William Archer's introductions to the contrary, wherein he confuses social and psychological dramas and wrongly places *Rosmersholm* in the former category, while plainly leaving Rosmer and Rebecca "alone with their tortured souls"—it should always be borne in mind that each of these dramas expresses a process of enlightenment in which the keynote of the setting may be found. With regard to this point of enlightenment, it may be said that Ibsen appears to have regarded society as a consuming element and to have had visions of certain individuals undergoing the consuming process. Of course, it was really Ibsen, the author, who was going through the furnace. It is always the great author, not his puppets, who is consumed. Apparently society believes that is what great authors are for. Ibsen saw his characters going through the fiery ordeal and reappearing divested of iniquities in the form of social lies. Regarded from this point of view, his later plays represent a resolution of terrible discords into a great harmony, and not the reverse, as many professionals imagine. All the dramas start at a climatic point, but under the conventional treatment they rush downward till the lowest note of tragedy is reached. They follow, in fact, the action of the first part of *Faust*, which moves from heaven through the world to hell, whereas rightly they should follow that of the second part, which returns from hell

through the world to heaven, or the emancipation of the soul. If settings were designed for *Rosmersholm* according to the latter idea, the colour would start in the first act on a low tone, say bluish-grey with a note of red, and make a progression through varying big discords symbolising the big scenes of acts two and three, finally resolving themselves back in the fourth act to the great harmony. Likewise, the lines would express and develop the aspiration and the obstacle motives, the upward line of the one being constantly checked by the crossed line of the other. At the conclusion of the first act are to be found some speeches by Rebecca and Frau Helfeth, denoting the calm direction of the lines of the first act and the coming violence of those in the succeeding acts. This form of interpretation may be objected to on the ground that it is too optimistic—that Ibsen was a confirmed pessimist, and proposed that his plays should end on a low note. But I am inclined to think that Ibsen, like most great artists, was unconscious of what he really did intend. He saw a thing and completely expressed it. The only justifiable way to interpret his work is that which acknowledges this completeness by giving it the widest expression. It is reasonable to assume that in *Rosmersholm* Ibsen has completely expressed the enlightenment that comes to two tortured souls in conflict with unrealisable desire, who at last see the necessity of taking destiny in their own hands and effacing their material selves as the only logical means of freedom. By such means they are enabled to sever all gross material contacts. Their emancipation should be announced by the rising, not by the setting sun. This would be more in accordance with the

main idea expressed in Ibsen's later plays, that the spiritually-minded persons are those who ought not to be born ; but being born, there is no need for them to make the most, or the least, of a bad material world. Some day we shall have an Ibsen theatre in London, wherein the reinterpretation of the great dramatist will add an essential impulse to the development of our own great drama. Perhaps it will help to teach English dramatists the Ibsen secret of rhythm and the distribution of mass in plays.

Returning to Professor Max Reinhardt, one may note the extraordinary equipment by which he is enabled to apply the aforementioned principles and to carry out his main ideas. He possesses in Berlin two theatres—one the famous Deutsches Theatre, and its annexe, the Kammerspielhaus. The latter is what may be termed a pocket theatre, dedicated exclusively to literary masterpieces and intimate productions. It has a seating capacity of three hundred persons ; only a few feet separate the audience from the actors ; and its cosy proportions, rose-coloured walls and seats, its crystal lights and exclusiveness, give it an air of a temple wherein subjects which are too sacred to be expressed intimately elsewhere are illuminated. In such a place the great and holy mysteries might be encountered, but apparently these are the very things that stay away. Sexual problems of the type of Ibsen's *Ghosts* and Wedekind's *Awakening of Spring* make their appearance instead.

The Deutsches Theatre is chiefly remarkable for its staff, which is composed of accomplished stage-managers, electricians, and a number of highly trained intelligences. Prominent

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among these are Arthur Kahane the literary director, Ernst Stern the art director, Felix Hollaender, Baron von Gersdorff, Count von Schwerin, Karl Vollmoeller, and Richard Ordynski—poets, musicians, authors, stage-managers,—all Professor Reinhardt's cultured co-operators. These are actively disseminating the ideas of the Deutsches Theatre in a fortnightly publication, the *Blätter des Deutschen Theaters*, published by Eric Reiss of Berlin. This propagandist publication is entirely devoted to the work of the theatre, and it serves the purpose of discussing each important production, such as *Everyman*, the Kleist and Shakespeare dramas, each of which is dealt with in a separate number, from the point of view of producer, stage-manager, actor, composer, decorator, and so forth. Beyond this, it makes a critical examination of drama in all its departments. There is also coming into existence a quantity of Reinhardt literature of more or less value as illuminating Professor Reinhardt's meteoric career. A notable addition is the *Max Reinhardt*, by Siegfried Jacobsohn (of the stimulating and progressive Schaubühne), which provides an interesting account of the producer's development in a sympathetic and critical examination of thirty different productions. The book fully illustrates his treatment of contemporary drama from the starting-point of his career.

There are many minor points in connection with the prevailing spirit of Reinhardtism that might be considered. Among these are the tremendous enthusiasm called forth on behalf of Max Reinhardt, the support both moral and material, the growth of followers and imitators, and the spread of the spirit throughout the Continent, and now to

this country. But enough has been said to afford a key to the study of Reinhardtism.

The influence of Reinhardtism, besides strongly affecting the Secessionists, who, like the Independents, are turning to the theatre for inspiration, is invading all the Berlin theatres, and the fluid "scene" is almost a commonplace. The bearing of the æsthetic tendencies on the drama itself is also considerable. Berlin is now witnessing the commencement of a romantic and classic renaissance in drama which promises to restore a much-needed emotional expressiveness to the drama. Realism is dying an unnatural death. The public has grown tired of hyper-modern perversities and mortuary atrocities which have recently passed for dramas. With no alternative, the German theatre director is busy resuscitating the classics. The procession of Sophocles, Euripides, Shakespeare, Schiller, Lessing, Kleist, Goethe, and others across the Teutonic stage is unending. Shakespeare has become a naturalised German. Last year he made no less than 1141 appearances, and was only a few steps behind Wagner and Schiller. He made his entrances gorgeously and becomingly attired, and moving amid finely conceived scenes. He was given a new stage and the support of companies of efficient actors. He bore no resemblance to the non-scenic and archæological Shakespeare.

It is not difficult to understand that a great deal of this activity is unprofitable. A fact that appears to be but little understood, both in and out of Berlin, is that the conception of dramatic action has changed from time to time according to the conception of the purpose of the

drama itself, the means of its representation, and the period in which it was written. Thus the action of the Greek drama differs from that of Shakespeare's, just as that of Racine's tragedies does from that of Goethe's, and Goethe's from Ibsen's. These dramatists wrote in their own times, and possibly not one of them contemplated that human ingenuity would devise such a perfect and elaborate system of representation as we moderns are about to possess. Otherwise they might have written their tragedies differently.

To-day we can represent actions which a Shakespeare, or Sophocles, or Goethe could never attempt to express. These are tremendously important actions, carried beyond spoken language by the language of music and the visualised scene. By such means the greatest and most complex soul, its subtlest significances, its most delicate nuances, are caught up, revealed, and illuminated. Thus, through its co-operation with enlightening music and eloquent decoration, dramatic action must attain a height undreamt of by the ancients, as well as by those moderns who are engaged in the fruitless task of adapting old forms of drama to the new forms of representation. To the latter the vision of the perfect trinity unveiling the deepest mysteries—mysteries embraced by the rhythm of the universe—and the remotest adventures of the human soul, has not yet appeared.

The present activity in the housing of the drama is in line with that of the reform of the "scene." In this connection the Berlin theatres reveal more markedly than any other type of building the artistic and cultural development in Germany. Generally speaking, they exhibit great progress

THE
HEBBEL THEATRE,
BERLIN.

(Architect, Oskar Kaufmann.)



THE EXTERIOR.

VIEW OF RIGHT SIDE
OF AUDITORIUM.

(The walls are composed
of brick and palisander
upholstered in yellow and
lilac.)



in plan and architectural rendering, and reveal a real attempt to make the interior and exterior conform to a high æsthetic standard, thus exhibiting an enthusiasm in the framing of the drama which England utterly lacks. There is also a growing tendency to construct the frame according to a principle originated by Wagner—namely, that of serving as an appropriate setting to a good play, and of being designed altogether to foster the desired dramatic mood in the spectator.

A very good example of this type of theatre is found in the Hebbel Theatre, named after an Austrian dramatist whose verse dramas, such as *Herod* and *Marianne*, *The Ring of Gyges*, *Judith*, *Mary Magdalene*, have become classics. It was built about four years ago, and is one of the masterpieces of Oskar Kaufmann, whose theatre architecture promises to become one of the features of modern Germany. He has recently designed a new Opera House for Berlin and a theatre for Bremerhaven, which cause the makeshifts in England to appear particularly cheap and painful. The Hebbel Theatre is really an *édition de luxe*—the last word, for the moment, in theatre-building. Its pose of dignity and gravity is just suited to serious plays. Its absence of tinsel and freedom from offence from box-office to dressing-room is a new sensation for those unfortunate persons who have suffered from the typically and wholly English method of transition from gorgeously vulgar foyer to the insanitary rabbit-hutches called dressing-rooms. In England it is not the general custom to keep in view the comfort and convenience of the actors. I believe Mr Lowenfeldt made an exception when he built the Apollo and provided dressing-rooms with the

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natural sunlight either in direct rays or diffused. These effects are obtained by the use of an absolutely white light thrown on to bands of coloured silk that act as reflectors and so diffuse the light over the whole scene.

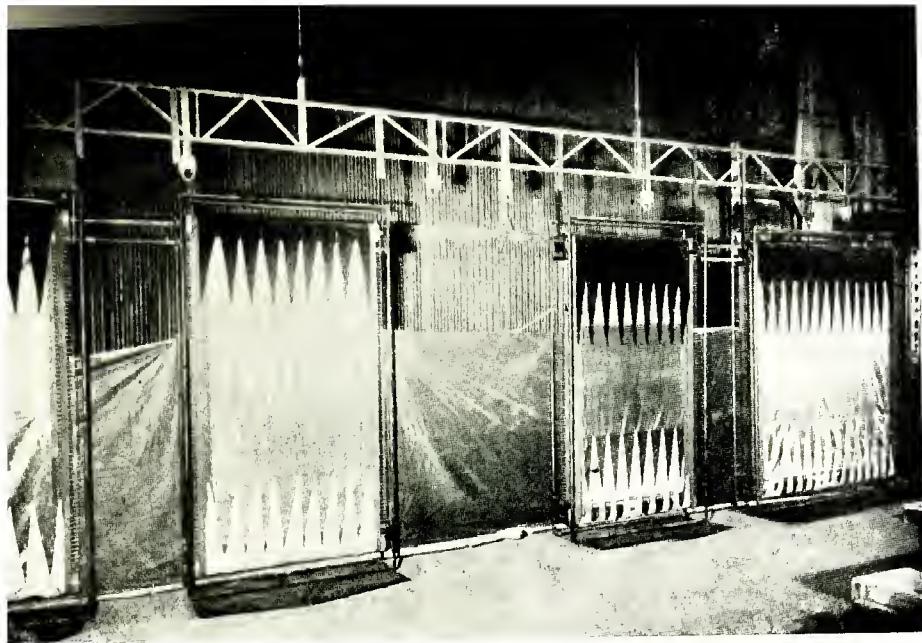
It has many advantages over the present system. It does away with the present unsatisfactory method of obtaining a sky perspective, by throwing coloured limelight directly on a white-washed wall or revolving backcloth, and offers instead a method that produces a wonderful illusion of a far-reaching perspective. It eliminates the patchy effects of the use of battens, floats, and perch-lights all over the top and sides of the stage, and produces instead a uniform tinted atmosphere enveloping everything. Again, it dispenses with the use of a great deal of stage lumber, wings, flies, etc. I had an opportunity of comparing the lighting effects of the Fortuny system with that obtained in *Faust* II. at the Deutsches Theatre, and found a remarkable difference. For one thing, the moonlight, sunset, and dawn tints of *Faust*, obtained by a light thrown directly on the white concrete round horizon, were grey compared with those of the Fortuny dome.

Though the theatre in Berlin is being broadened and sweetened by the application of artistic principles, the city itself is not being transformed by the same means. One can imagine civics with art, one can also imagine civics without art, especially if one happens to be in Berlin, where the imagination is active. There one can see with half an eye that the recent city growth has not been quickened by the true æsthetic spirit. On the contrary, it is a very bad example of city development and embellishment. Like London, it is

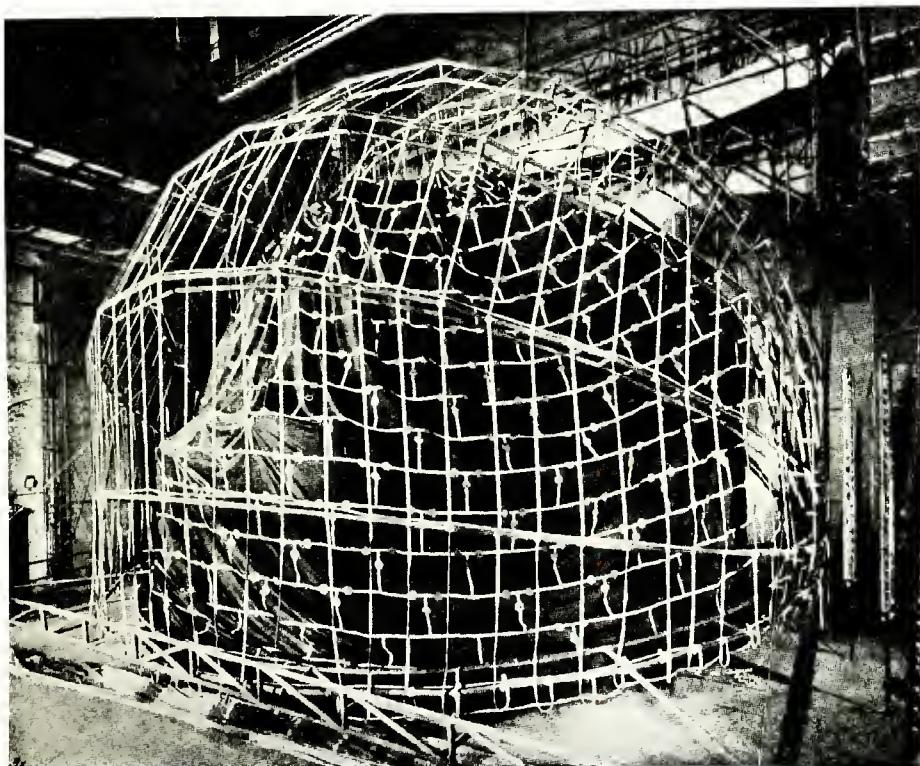
a warning how dull a city may become that is allowed to grow up without the guidance and control of the well-preserved plan that Paris possesses. The world to-day is one vast improvement association, largely governed in commercial matters by English ideas. Berlin has the air of having been manufactured in the British Colonies, and distantly recalls the glories of a better-class, third-rate American run-up-in-the-night town, where the thoroughfares are proudly lined, on the one hand, with sky-scrappers, and humbly, on the other, with Uncle Tom's Cabins. It might have been better if the city fathers had been more intelligent. Somewhere in the 'eighties Berlin was a London suburb of 500,000 inhabitants, with all the possibilities of a wonderful development. But the possibilities were not seen, and the city went on developing in its own haphazard fashion, until to-day it is anything but a typical German city. Indeed, it is a formless shell housing over 2,000,000 souls, including the inoffensive paupers who appear to lead a life of strenuous idleness as caretakers. Berlin has no slums; it has solved the slum problem by breeding a race of concierges who burrow underground and keep the cellars of the prosperous flats well aired.

But it is not the purpose of this book to criticise housing problems, whether German or other. Berlin's artistic sins and omissions ought not, however, to escape mention. Architecturally speaking, Berlin may be said to make a "hit" in a particularly big, ostentatious, coarse, and ugly way. Its wide, wind-swept thoroughfares, with their broad avenues of festooned trees running down the centre, are certainly imposing. No one would deny the Unter den Linden pride of place

with the world's noble boulevards. But it is doubtful whether Berlin's other thoroughfares and avenues, finished and unfinished, are entitled to rank with the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne ; the Long Walk, Windsor ; the Marine Drive, Palermo ; the Covered Walk, Homburg ; Pasco de la Reforma, Mexico ; the Champs Elysées ; Princes Street, Edinburgh ; May Avenue, Buenos Ayres ; or Vienna's fine main boulevards. Still, these Berlin boulevards serve nicely to throw the architecture back and to reduce it to due proportions, while they tend to emphasise the commonplace exteriors and vulgar over-elaborated details, such as the unangelic faces, fixed up with the mortar, trashy stucco scrollwork, stupid ornamentation, crude giltwork, and other abominations. Needless to add, Berlin's commercial architecture has a very strong British accent. One tradesman, Wertheim, has, however, conspired to present Berlin with a local reputation for business premises, and has spent his millions on a mammoth Renaissance store that reduces even Whiteley's latest to a Bayswater maisonette.



THE FORTUNY LIGHTING SYSTEM: THE BANDS OF SILK



THE FORTUNY LIGHTING SYSTEM: THE FIRMAMENT.

IV

THE NEW SPIRIT IN LEIPZIG

Neo-Kantism—Civic forms of art and artistic town-planning—The Luft-Bad movement—Its influence on civics and the Secessionists—The reaction against Wagner—The State-opera myth.

I FOUND Leipzig rather flat-faced and a little footworn, seated by the streams of music and ambitious publication, revealing but few fresh features of interest. She had opened her arms again to Kant and idealistic philosophy, and had awokened to the artistic possibilities of town-planning. Listening to the gods of wisdom, she had girded herself with a broad ring boulevard patterned on Paris, Copenhagen, Nijny-Novgorod, Breslau, and so many Continental cities fashioned after Vienna. She had embellished herself with park, plaza, and monument, and she had taken to herself one of the most promising garden suburbs, the Leipzig Gartenvorstadt, “Marienbrunn.” But, above all, she had dismissed the man with the foot-rule in order to engage an artist who can perceive and develop the natural and artistic possibilities of her fertile waste places to construct a model plan that may be used for further town developments. She whispered to me, “When this system of employing artists to town-plan has become universal, it will no doubt be adopted in England.” I agreed.

Perhaps this growth of civic consciousness is partly explained by the Luft-Bad movement aiming to promote the habit of bathing in the air and sun. It would be interesting to know to what extent the new open-air gymnasia, "Das Sportluftbad," of which Leipzig possesses the finest example, affect civic and artistic ideals. Surely from such centres where men and women exercise themselves daily for hours, and, like Walt Whitman on the Atlantic sea-board, in a state of nudity, the old ideas of impurity and the ugly suggestiveness of modern dress depart with the neurotics finally for the lower world. Watching the air-bathers at play, I remembered that a perfect body has been from earliest times a wonderful means of inspiring artistic productions. It was easy to infer from this that so much bad architecture had sprung into existence on the growth of the fanaticism which demands that the entire body shall be hidden. Men were once inspired, no doubt, by the rhythmic movements of the undraped body, by the wonderful play of light and shade, by the suggestion of great masses, and were led to the essential study of the supreme application of mechanical forces by the living and exquisite manifestations of the laws of harmony, balance, direction, and proportion. The contemplation of the human body engaged in gymnastic exercises is said to have formed the basis for early Greek forms of art, especially sculpture. But men are now denied this source of inspiration. Even our music-hall gladiators appear in evening-dress.

The Luft-Bad may also explain a peculiar feature of the exhibition of the Leipziger and Deutschen Kunsterbund. At the Städtischen Kaufhause I found an enormous increase

in nudes treated in a manner that is frightening timid critics in England. To the veteran accustomed to Continental exhibitions, the vision of extremely realistic and brutal nudes would have no other effect than that of raising a mildly put “What next?” As he walked through the badly lighted rooms and corridors of a building clearly not intended for picture exhibitions, he would admire those sunny naked girls by Peter Bayer, beside the limpid stream, with the rough-cut, green grasses running up to the red-roofed village full against the revolving summer sky. He would face calmly Bossert’s wonderful woodcut “Kreuzigung,” unable to decide whether the modern woman is throwing up her hands in horror at the extreme realistic treatment of the naked crucified figures, or is overcome by grief. Lovis Corinth’s glowing clouds of female flesh in “Der Harem” would not hold him long; nor would the back view of Groêber’s young woman, who is half undressed and simmering in her petticoats. He would examine fearlessly Habermann’s “Liegender Akt,” undismayed by the thought that a rhythmical nude so cushioned body-deep in the yielding bed would bring the red to England’s cheek. No perspiration would bedew his monumental brow as he passed to even more daring exhibits, the uncompromising “Frühling” and “Mädchen” by Gelbke, two brutally-treated nudes, mixing their harmonious flesh tones with the tall, rippling grasses; the vibrating figures by Heckendorf, exhibiting a volcanic eruption of pigment and a strange variety of dancing colour; and some wild and whirling colour studies by ultra-extremists. The latter were apparently the wild oats of the exhibition. But as they were stowed away

in dark corners, they could not possibly bring a blush to any cheek—except a cat's. A further explanation of the present daring treatment of nudes may be found in the fact that, according to the new form of painting which identifies itself with an intense search for truth of impression, any means to attain the desired end is permissible and not necessarily indecent. Indeed, painters believe they are justified in using any method or any medium they like to attain their object. They may even go to *Luft-Bads* and catch fleeting impressions of glittering bodies, but they must put down faithfully the impression produced, and record any detail for the sake of harmony and balance. If the painter believes he should balance a black head of hair with black patches all over the body, he may do so, as long as he produces a work of art. Because the half-educated layman and uncultivated critic says he has produced an indecent work, it does not prove that the work is indecent. It only proves that the layman and critic say so.

The further influence of the *Luft-Bad* may be traced in the attitude of certain German professors who have lately taken to advocating nude dancing in public. It may be as well to mention that it is not their own wives and daughters who are the dancers.

Coming a step nearer to Leipzig, I find that not only is she footworn, but seated on the stone of reaction. It is a musical reaction. Music, like drama, is, it seems, in a state of transition. Like drama, it is bound to move or cease to exist. That which is the outcome of the evolutionary processes of the human mind must keep abreast of those processes



THE FORTUNY LIGHTING SYSTEM, SHOWING THE USE OF THE FIRMAMENT AND THE SIMPLIFICATION OF SCENERY.

or perish ; it must go hand in hand with the spirit that informs it, or lose its vitality. Both music, drama, and the plastic forms of art are vitalised by the spirit of the age, just as the spirit is quickened by the need or desire of the moment. As the age grows old, so the musical, dramatic, and plastic expressions become grey-headed. When the spirit has passed there remain nothing but empty forms as memorials of the departed spirit. Though we can preserve the forms we cannot revitalise them. For us the drama of ancient Greece, the music of the Middle Ages, the painting and sculpture of Italy in its greatest period, are dead, and no artificial means of resuscitation, no acquirement of culture or taste, can give them life. The ideas, tastes, culture that fashioned and vitalised them were of another age. These arose from a desire the full quality or nature of which we can neither feel, understand, nor appreciate. It sprang from a singular and peculiar social or racial experience of joy, hope, ambition, or what not, to which we are strangers, just as the present growing desire for a nobler expression of life springs from a singular and peculiar spirit of revolt against the expression of the unutterably mean and sordid, which will have its growth, development, and decay, and which future generations moulded by new experiences cannot revive. Each age has its own spirit, and people who pursue progress and reform should live in the spirit of their age and express it. They should remember that alliances with other ages are really misalliances. It would seem, however, that occasionally a great genius is born before his time, who is able to express the spirit of a later generation. Beethoven had to wait for adequate inter-

pretation. It was the same with Mozart and Wagner. It is now claimed that the music of Bach is closely linked with the spirit of this age, and satisfies the new desire for a fuller expressiveness than music has had since Bach died. Whether the suggestion that Bach has only just reached maturity justifies the present craze for interpreting every class of work which he produced, is doubtful. It may only be an excuse for the turning back of pages in order to obtain an impulse for a fresh start, just as painters are turning to ancient China and Egypt for the same reason. In any case, I found the birthplace of Wagner revelling in Bach. Besides the weekly Bach motet programme at the Thomas Kirche, she has just been taking courses of the composer for breakfast (9 to 11 church liturgy), for dinner (12 to 3 matinée), and for supper (7 to 10 Passion Music). Another explanation of the revival of Bach may be found in the popularity and influence with the younger men, of Max Reger, the modern Bach as he is called.

The reaction goes further. With the rise of Bach has come the decline of Wagner. It is one more instance of the mortality of music and musicians. The music of Wagner, which till recently was considered immortal, is now said to be fairly out of date, and the verdict of the "music-lover" is that it will die and be as comfortably buried as the music of the early Egyptians. The younger men are against Wagner. They say he is not sufficiently modern, and his music strikes the keynote of monotonous mediocrity. He is not so young as Bach, and he has failed to live up to his two masters, Bach and Beethoven. To them Wagner is to Bellini what Beethoven

is to Michelangelo. There are many evidences of Wagner's growing unpopularity. Writers are attacking him in the musical journals ; and a novel, Beyerlein's *Stirb und Werde*, has just appeared to inform the general public that Wagner is not the colossal figure he appears to be. Again, Wagner's recently published autobiography, *Mein Leben*, is all against him. It reveals the composer as a very small and unpleasant character. He is far too much concerned with petty details rather than with big masses, occupied in abusing his wife, and mixed up with mean financial matters, such as the Harnstein affair. The work, which has been badly translated into English, will not beat the record of Bismarck's autobiography. It will not sell. A sequel to the weak side of the book appears in the publication in the *Neue Freie Presse* and the New York *Nation* of certain letters that passed between the real Wagner and persons from whom he sought to obtain loans. Wagner has, however, found a defender in Mr David Irvine, who in a brochure, *Wagner's Bad Luck*, exposes no less than eight hundred errors in the authorised translation of the autobiography. This is not a bad record ; but perhaps Mr Irvine would have done better had he set out to prove that great men ought not to write autobiographies. They are seldom illuminating, except on the wrong side, and rarely edifying. The character of Beethoven, for example, was not improved by the recently discovered manuscripts of the great composer. Writing of his quarrels with his nephew Karl's mother and a Viennese functionary, he says : " I am a man cruelly misunderstood ; on all sides hunted like a wild animal, often treated in the vilest manner by these vulgar

officials, and waging a continual conflict with this monster of a mother, who is always trying to stifle whatever good has been done. With so much trouble, therefore, I believe that psychologists will pardon me if sometimes I let my temper get the better of me."

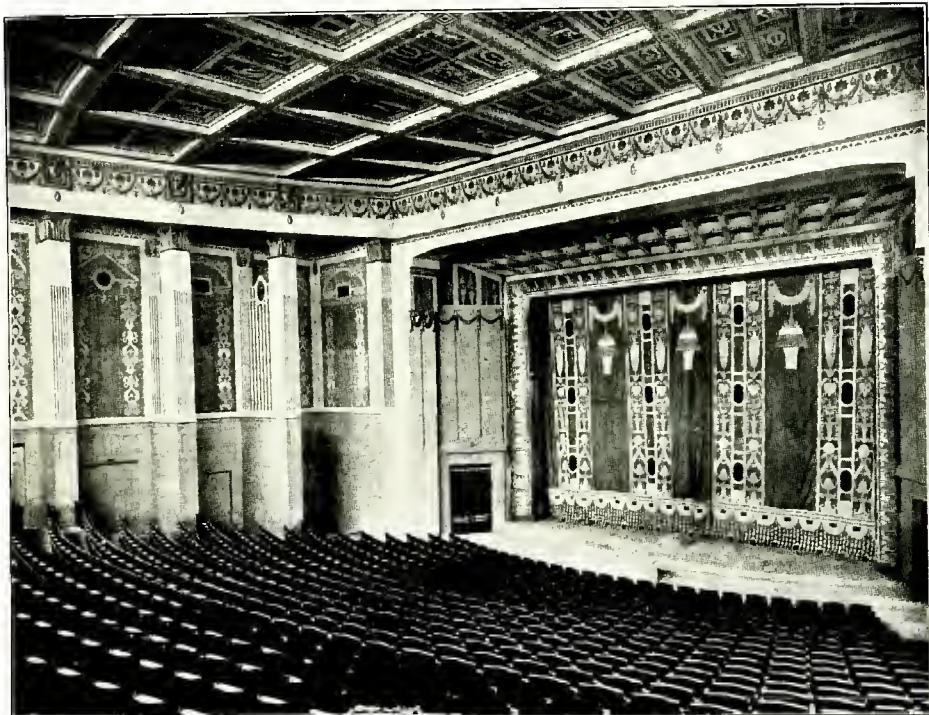
Wagner is also declining as a thinker. His economics, sociology, and metaphysics, wanderings in the footsteps of Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Co., are regarded as sadly incomprehensible nonsense. Certainly his philosophical speculations are of less value than his music, and are not indispensable to the understanding of it. Perhaps the loss of Wagner's reputation in this direction is due to the strengthening view that the artist's business is not to describe and explain natural and social phenomena, but to illuminate the soul of his subject. The great artist who sets out to explain art is greatly to be pitied. Not only does he crucify himself, but he lays a deadly trap for unwary critics. Science explains ; art illuminates.

Thus Leipzig is turning her back upon her son of genius, whose ideas, strangely enough, are beginning to influence the development of the drama and the theatre. The cultivated revolutionary who knows his history of the evolutionary phases of music, drama, and art will not be greatly alarmed by this reactionary tendency. But even to him who knows that new forms are inevitable, the way for their coming may not be plain sailing at first. It has many obstacles. The channel is full, in particular, of destructive reaction, tradition, misunderstanding, and ignorance. It requires a courageous, persevering, and agile pilot to surmount its

THE SCHILLER THEATRE, BERLIN.
(Architect, Professor M. Littmann.)



THE ENTRANCE.



AMPHITHEATRE AND STAGE.

intricate difficulties. Even in Germany, where there is a well-organised and fully-developed system of subsidised theatres and opera-houses designed to promote music and drama, unusual qualities are demanded of pioneers of new forms. Perhaps it is because the system of subsidised theatres does not play its proper part in creative evolution, and is, in some respects, as bad as the English private system. It could not be worse. The principles and practice of subsidised theatres on the Continent have been dealt with in a competent book by Messrs William Archer and Granville Barker. They are herein examined with a view to their application to an organised theatre in England. Thus they serve the useful purpose of embodying a plea for the establishment of an endowed theatre. The book does not profess to go beyond this. Or, if it did, it might include some of the facts on the defects of the Continental subsidised theatre, which I have found the intendants of the German subsidised theatres at Leipzig, Dresden, Munich, Breslau, Berlin, and so on, willing to hand out in a cautious way. Such facts tend to illuminate the truth of the practical working of the subsidised State theatre, and are always worth recording. Felix Weingartner, in his book on *Conducting*, points to the disastrous effect of the system on the musician. From what I heard in Leipzig, it appears that the State opera-house does not breed the new composer. It waits instead till he has been thoroughly tested elsewhere, and then secures him and converts him into a conventional machine. But even this privilege might be denied a State opera-house in England, seeing that England does not breed composers—at least, not like the Continent,

where the new men, the Max Regers, are as plentiful as the proverbial blackberry.

An important contribution to the æsthetic movement in the theatre has been made in Leipzig. During my visit there people were discussing the production by Dr Hans Lœwenfeld of the Stadttheater, of Shakespeare on a divided stage. I was unable to ascertain whether this meant scenes being played in two parts, and, if so, how the main difficulty was solved of the spectator on the right-hand side of the auditorium being able to see the left-hand opening. Dr Lœwenfeld's scenery for Mozart's *Zauberflöte*, with designs by Professor Lefler of the Vienna School of Decoration, will be found referred to elsewhere in the supplementary chapter on the illustrations.



Théâtre des Arts, Paris.

{ Design by M. Dethomas for the programme of "Le Carnaval des enfants."

V

THE NEW SPIRIT IN BEYREUTH

The Festival Theatre and the Festival Spirit—Wagner's contribution to the modern theatre movement.

WHEN Wagner conceived the idea of establishing a theatre at Beyreuth he doubtless intended to give Beyreuth the atmosphere of Wagner. But that was many years ago ; and since then Beyreuth has taken its revenge, and in a calculating, speculating sort of way has contrived to invest Wagner with the atmosphere of a tradesman.

To-day it is Wagner here, Wagner there, Wagner, in fact, everywhere. Wagner and Rhinegold. If one quits the alluring Wagner Avenue leading up to the high-priced Wagner Theatre, the eye falls on Lohengrin pensions ; the step may turn in the direction of Tannhäuser cafés, where one is privileged to pay five marks for the 1.25 breakfast they give you in Berlin. Indeed, one meets the commercial glances of Wotan, Siegfried, Tristan, Parsifal, and other distinguished heroes, falling from houses, streets, shops, flashing from all sorts of useful household commodities, from desiccated soup to soap, all warranted in trade terms to help you on the road to the Master's world-view. The bright spirit of Wagner reigns in Beyreuth—in music and money.

Wagner's idea in handing over his theatre and his glory to Beyreuth was not to give that secular-minded place an opportunity of exploiting his genius for ready cash. It was in pursuit of his desire to make a church of the theatre, to consecrate it to the highest form of expression, to make it a retreat to which human beings might go to hear the finest examples of creative work. He wanted to show how much more important becomes work rescued from the vulgar and impure when represented in a temple whose design should be fitting to its gravity and consistent with the import of its ideas. He was dissatisfied with the conventional way of representing his own music-dramas whose design is continuous, sandwiched between out-of-date operas with which they have no relation. If it was necessary to offer a gasping public strong contrasts of music in heaven and music in hell—well, he, Wagner, could supply the necessary passages.

It was an admirable thing to desire to decorate the interior of a dignified building with fine music-dramas, just as Michelangelo decorated the Sistine Chapel with noble paintings. But while he was about it, Wagner might have gone a step further and demonstrated that it was possible to construct a beautiful building worthy of such decoration, where justice could be done to his own form of music-drama, and where the mood could be created essential to its understanding and appreciation. If Wagner was influenced by the Church, why did he not go to the Church for some of his architectural ideas? He has stated that in the Church the higher self may project itself in the deepest devotion; while in the theatre man is brought face to face with his higher or lower self.

(Of recent years it has been only his lower self.) In seeking to impart to the theatre the consecration and dignity of the highest artistic expression of the same spirit of enlightenment which has manifested itself as religion under the form of mysteries, symbolically expressed, Wagner might have gone the whole length and introduced the æsthetic unity so conspicuous in the Church, and which is so successful in creating an essential mood of religious ecstasy. If the theatre is to replace the Church, as it promises to do in Germany, where in many places it occupies the central position, near the castle, there is no reason why it should not preserve some of the best artistic features of its prototype. The theatre in the future, like the Church in the past, should foster the growth of brilliant schools of artists. Wagner has, however, made his house consistent. It is big, theatrical, and monotonous. The exterior aspect conforms nicely to that of the interior, which is constructed solely to strengthen the mood produced by the works represented. Perhaps he rendered a real service to playgoers when he put the orchestra and its conductor out of sight. He rightly believed, also, in the powers of the rows of self-contained seats rising gently to the single tier of boxes, of producing the right mood in the spectator. So seated, each spectator is in his own kingdom of imagination for the time being. This arrangement also offers a solution to the artistic problem of the sight line, seeing that it enables the spectator to view the stage entire from all parts of the auditorium. It is impossible to do so in the old form of theatre. But it leaves the question of vitality untouched. Acting does not preserve its importance and vitality beyond a certain

distance, while actors tend to decrease in size and significance. Wagner's introduction of the second proscenium—a front one, unlighted, and designed to cut off the stage and create the effect of distance, was an inspiration. Wagner called it the "mystisches Abgrund," believing that it separated the real from the ideal, and in so doing gave an air of mystery both to the "scene" and the acting. But there was no need for Wagner and his architect to add those columnar projections to the interior, even though he was opposed to flat walls. These bits of monotonous architecture, loudly congratulating themselves on the assumption that they are an addition to the attractions of Wagner's Festival Theatre, are really a bore. The theatre has the faults of its early novelties. Such faults are disappearing with the development of the Wagner-Semper principles of theatre construction. The transforming influence of these principles is as great as the three dominant influences in the European theatre to-day—the music-drama of Wagner, Post-expressionism, and Ibsenism, that source of modern drama.

It may be assumed from Wagner having tried to build his theatre in Munich that another of his ideas was to give as many musical-minded persons as possible an opportunity of hearing his works performed under ideal conditions. Under a different form of civilisation it might have been possible fully to realise the Master's benevolent intentions. Under our own form the intentions have only succeeded in setting in motion powerful commercial forces calculated to defeat their ends. The remoteness of the theatre and the shortness of the season have rendered the Wagner Festival accessible only to

the moneyed class. The latter approach the enchantress Music through an abyss lined with agents and speculators. The striking success which attends the efforts of these gentry to make the Beyreuth Festival purely a money-making affair is a matter for tears. Not long ago I wrote to the director, explaining that I was coming to Beyreuth, in my official capacity of art and dramatic critic, with the pious hope of hearing a Wagner different in temper and design from the understudy which London mostly sees fit to inflict upon a long-suffering public. Could he reserve seats for me, and could he, moreover, give me an opportunity to see the fine theatre which the world was now accustomed to talk about?—or words to that effect. From the official reply I cull the following amazing passage: “There are no seats. We cannot permit you to see the theatre. There are no standing places.” Accompanying this document was a circular with all the Festival performances carefully ruled out in red ink. In a conspicuous place were the words, “No more tickets to be had,” also in red ink. On the reverse of the circular were notices of the business arrangements: “Tickets for the *Ring* will be issued for the complete cycle only. Price £4.” Applications for tickets must be made several months ahead. Beyond this, the agents undertook to supply visitors with apartments, and were careful to mention in large letters that “Two restaurants are in the immediate neighbourhood of the theatre, where dinners, suppers, and light refreshments can be had at fixed prices.” It was an extraordinary communication, and it was self-explanatory. If the business persons who run this Beyreuth Festival are unable to get all the profit they

desire out of the performances, they are evidently determined to fix up a further source of income by competing with the lodging-house keepers, and by undertaking to supply their patrons with exhilarating food and beverage when such are required to supplement the exhilarating music. But the letter I received was not true. When I reached Beyreuth I found there were seats to be had for the *first* performance. In effect, this kind of advertisement is a stupid trick played off upon the Press in order to circulate a report of the extraordinary demand for seats. The depth to which the average devout Wagnerians have fallen is plainly indicated by the fact that they will stand the impositions of the Festival agents without a protest.

In another way Wagner contrived to defeat his main purpose. He wrote extremely long-winded operas that require a deal of patience to sit out ; unlike Strauss, who has gone to the other extreme, and is writing extremely short-winded operas in which there is practically nothing to sit out. In consequence, intervals of an hour between each act of the Wagner music-drama have been introduced apparently to enable the intellectuals to revive, but in reality to allow the neighbouring restaurant to conduct a flourishing business. During the intervals of the *Meistersingers* one could see how admirably the arrangement worked. The people who visit Beyreuth to-day are vastly different from those who came to the Bavarian town years ago. In former days the *Ring* brought forth the earnest student, and fearful- and wonderful-looking persons who were prepared to sit out each opera without a break, even though it meant breaking the Bible



ACT III, "THE MAGIC FLUTE." PRODUCED AT THE LEIPZIG STATE THEATRE.

Designed by Professor Löffler.

record for fasting. Now the wealthy class have taken to patronising Wagner, and it is the well-fed, comfortable person, not the neurotic, extra-cultured out for new sensations, who visits Beyreuth. Wagner, in fact, makes his appeal to persons to whom the "mood" is not complete without a visit to the theatre bar. Accordingly, it is not surprising to find the restaurants crowded with the élite, who are not averse from discussing the first act over a savoury dish, and arriving at the Wagnerian *leit-motiv* by the aid of a light lager. So I found the affair full of strange contradictions. I knew that Wagner had been at great pains to devise means to preserve the "mood" of the spectator, while here everything contributed to destroy it.

In fact, the whole affair has too many loose ends to hold one's undivided attention. Apart from the food festival, which quite destroyed my interest in the representation of the *Meistersingers*, there was the unsatisfactory nature of the new scenery by Professor Bruchner to irritate further. There are, it seems, painters who are stage decorators by instinct, and others who are not. Professor Bruchner is not. He does not understand how to create a picture solely for the stage, so as to obtain movement and to meet the variations and peculiarities of lighting effects. His unsuccessful attempts to provide a background to Wagner's pieces follow in the steps of many others, which have not been governed by stage laws and have had no relation to the symbolism of Wagner's music and words. The Wagnerian decorator exists, but he is unknown to Beyreuth.

One performance served to complete my disillusion.

There were other fine things to come. But there were too many distracting elements, and I fled to Munich.

The one gleam of hope in all this muddled darkness is to be found in the fact that a theatre devoted to the representations of music-drama of the highest order has been established, and this through the generosity of the King of Bavaria. The Wagner Theatre is, in fact, further evidence of the great interest taken in the theatre and drama by the German aristocracy. Kings and ruling dukes in pursuit of a fine hobby have built wonderful private theatres and endowed men of the highest genius. Goethe was intendant at Weimar. It reveals the possibility of a real advance in the theatre in England once the cultured aristocracy recognises its duty and comes to the rescue of the æsthetic movement, which requires not so much the expenditure of large sums as the exercise of the finest artistic judgment and taste. For proof there is the failure of the Millionaires' Theatre in New York.

VI

THE NEW SPIRIT IN NUREMBERG

The Meistersinger Mood—The Art and Craft Guild-spirit of the Middle Ages and its significance to-day—Old and new Nuremberg compared.

THERE is more sustained *Meistersingers* atmosphere in old Nuremberg than in Wagner's opera as presented at Bayreuth. Even on the journey from Bayreuth to Nuremberg there is more insistence on the mood Wagner sought to create than exhaustion. It is quite common to find small groups of travellers eagerly discussing the Master's intention and analysing the motives of his work with a great deal of sympathy and no little intuition. As the conversation lengthens and the subject deepens, one does indeed drift to the margin of an imaginary world, to remain there while the inspired poet cobbler Hans Sachs and many a worthy burgomaster and whole groups of merry apprentices reconstruct that curious sunlit sphere in which they moved and found expression. The journey is, in fact, a fitting prelude to the once famous City of Guilds, to the city that was the Art and Craft centre of the Middle Ages, the pulse, brain, and heart of mediæval Europe, the Mecca to which Italy came across the Alps. It is, as I have suggested, the symbol of the Middle Age spirit and movement, just as the old Sebaldus Church

was once the symbol of the objective world of sound. We have only to call forth that immense concourse of apprentices, burghers, and judges closely packing every part of this spacious and richly decorated church, each one taking a live interest in the tournament of song, to realise what this world signified. It belonged to the great moods of humanity. Such moods, when we can realise them, send us on our way rejoicing. Old Nuremberg was created in the mood of co-operation. To-day even, in the grip of decay, and with the modern commercial spirit rapidly effacing its beauty, it rises to its original melodic heights, and speaks to the sympathetic observer of a period when the citizens of a town or city combined to obtain the finest artistic results. Everything in the old mediæval city can, in fact, be brought into relation with this particular mood. Co-operation combined with extreme cheerfulness. The artist at work, the joyful student alongside.

Look, for instance, how Art and Craft reign supreme in the old buildings. One can see that when these were constructed it was not the fashion to order private and public architecture, as one orders potatoes and coals, from tradesmen who have a stock of ready-made shells on hand into which they pack their ready-made goods, or who will cheerfully undertake to build anything, from a lunatic asylum with a nice sun-bath on the roof for the patients, to a "pretty" bijou residence with three commodious bedrooms on the first floor, a dressing-room or two, a boxroom, bathroom, and lavatory on the same floor. A shell, at that time, grew round an individual, and a house or a town-hall was then the product

of the Art and Craft worker, who had devoted himself to a study of applied art, and who was counted accordingly as an artist. As such he was publicly acknowledged and encouraged.

There was no Royal Academy to boycott him as a craftsman, and practically to uphold painting as the only form of art by supporting the proceeding of taking care of canvases of a sort and leaving architecture, sculpture, and design to take care of themselves. His importance was frankly recognised ; there was a demand for his finest work, and for such work produced in harmonious co-operation with his fellow-artists. As a result, he was enabled to let himself go, guided and inspired by the efficient mind of the Meistersinger. The latter planned the symphony, the apprentices filled in the parts. The composition was unified, yet made up of many vital expressions. This may be the reason of its joy and its undoubted popularity. At any rate, it excuses the preservation of landmarks like the house that Hans Sachs lived in, readapting Boccaccio, composing plays and songs, and quickening everything with his unfailing humour.

Perhaps there never was so much joy expressed in Art and Craft as in the finest period of Nuremberg. Take only the merry little burgher figures of the very original water-fountains in the open spaces. They are movement personified. They dance away to the tune of the glittering cascades, and impart the feeling of setting the whole of humanity in joyous motion. One can understand the love that went to the making of these things. Old Nuremberg is, in short, the harvest of the mediæval mind. It is both inspired and inspiring. It is just the place for black-and-white men and

etchers. It always has been. We can see the genius of Dürer fired by the comedy of original lines so full of character, by the play of quaint masses, by the gracious pageant of light and shade created by the ancient buildings nestling within the shadow of that grey stone castle pressed to an immense height. Indeed, the whole place has the effect of an exhibition of natural impressive plates.

But this autumn-toned fragment has also many an eloquent note loved of painters. One can imagine the brush hastening from one beauty to another of that exquisite view from the quaint suspension bridge hung athwart the old wall. From the silver sheen of the weir to the gentle span of the sheltering grey bridge so nicely balanced by the graceful cluster of green trees ; from the encompassing side streams vibrating with air, light, line, and colour—shimmering blues, greens, yellows, and pinks—to the mass of red and violet roofs carved against the clouded amber sky. Hastening from point to point till those original interwoven and crowded roof lines are reached. Then a pause. Here is a subtle balance of irregularities that will lure and baffle the most seasoned artist. The painter who depends largely on his selective sense will find elsewhere a good deal of sorting necessary in order to make his own class of attractive picture. He will, for one thing, have to remove those two twelfth-century Gothic towers of St Lorenz Church overlooking the quiet group of romantic Middle Age architecture, also within sound of the weir. As a rule, realism does not find ancient towns and cities good halting-places. The walls, roofs, and towers of these, though paintable, are not satisfactory subjects for



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photographic representation. They are the material of which impressionist poems are made.

Nuremberg is both a decoration and a drama. The old city is a decoration admirably reflecting the decorative co-operative mind of the Middle Ages. The new growth is a drama ; it is the dramatic expression of the modern spirit of competition. It may be seen from the castle tower gradually filling the wide basin formed by the sweep of hills, repeating the old in a bad imitation of the deep-pointed reddish-brown roofs pitted with tier upon tier of tiny windows, and putting on new and ugly forms. The twentieth-century gasometer goes at the trot across the horizon, while factories honey-comb the perspective with smoke-stacks as dense as at that marmalade borough, Bonnie Dundee. The eye wanders instinctively from this hideously designed new world to the exquisite remnant of a decaying past. One reflects. We think we know so much. Were those alive who lived three or four hundred years ago they would probably wonder we know so little—especially in some matters of art. We do not know, for instance, how to combine in artistic achievements. Still, it must be admitted that we are acquiring more power to express ourselves both individually and together. The search for unity, simplicity, and beauty in the theatre is serving to bring together groups of workers having a single purpose and harmoniously constituted to produce it. The artistic spirit of the Middle Ages has been carried across the foot-lights, and its fragrance is beginning to disinfect the rank artificial atmosphere of the stage. A conscious attempt is being made to recapture the Meistersinger mood—if not in

England, at least out of it. It is true there is an attempt being made to start a School of Mural Painting in England. Funds are being raised to enable students to carry out their designs in public buildings under the direction of teachers, and an exhibition in support of the scheme is to be held at Crosby Hall. Apparently, however, the School will have little to do with the Middle Ages order. It proposes to start at the wrong end with students under art teachers instead of with apprentices under artists. Rightly considered the only person to prepare a place for mural painting is the architect; and *his* future is in the hands of the municipalities. Once they have the intelligence and taste to choose the right man, he will orchestrate Art and Craft and bring them into harmony with his architectonic rhythm. They have plenty of master-builders to make a start with, every incentive in fact to follow the example of Old Nuremberg.



The Dalcroze System of Dancing.

Design by M. Thévenez.

VII

THE NEW SPIRIT IN DRESDEN

Rhythm and the dance spirit—The improved architectural features of exhibition buildings and picture galleries—Hellerau, Germany's first garden suburb—The Jaques-Dalcroze system of dancing—The Dresden State Theatre.

I WAS in the midst of a sun breakfast on the verandah of the romantically situated Kurhaus at Klein-Zschachwitz. I had eaten the last cluster of a portion of the gleanings of the Rhine vintage, and was making friends with a small pine forest and some silver birches, when a cloud glided between me and them. A friend had come with a startling piece of news. He had heard that the new spirit in painting was abroad in Dresden. I was glad to hear this, and set out at once for the temple where the spirit was enshrined. It was first the turn of the Elbe to remind me of the elements which the modern movement in painting is seeking to express. As I drifted on the flood tide throughout the hour and a half's journey from Zschachwitz to Dresden, the many and varied forms of a natural rhythmical life made their bow to me. The cool, penetrating, early-morning odour of the water, the colour threading the dimpled surface of the river, the pine-clad highway conducting to gossamer heights, the original red-roofed houses dipping and swaying in cataracts of green

foliage, threw greetings. A crystal stream wandered down the hillside to fill me with a sense of fascinating motion. The lofty plateau above Loschwitz glazed itself with atmosphere, to impart a sense of Nature's unity. The long procession of bathing women seated astride floating beams, or sprawling full length in the sun, filled me with the joy of fluid line and colour. There were other impressions and expressions in mass and detail from rhythmical and dancing things, all forming a charming prelude to the graceful and artistic flowing lines of Dresden.

As I climbed to the Aquarell Exhibition the nature symphony yielded to the art symphony. But I found the latter was not the same. I had been deceived. The new spirit was not there. The exhibition was, however, seen and enjoyed as one containing much clever if not advanced work. The eloquent colour of D. Hettner, the mystery of Dill's poetical landscapes, the masterly compositions by Kuehl, the very admirable impressions by Anne E. Angermann, the amazing strength of L. Corinth, were acknowledged to be worth noting ; while my verdict on the two most interesting young men, Wilhelm Claus, George Gelbke, was, "They are doing good work, and must go to Paris."

If Dresden does not understand the new ideas in painting, it knows how to exhibit modern pictures in rooms so admirably designed and arranged as to increase, not decrease, the artistic value of exhibits. It is indeed surprising to what a high level of excellence the architecture of its exhibitions attains. At the really big Hygiene Exhibition then being held in the city, it was impossible to avoid the sensation

of pleasure aroused by the unified, simple, perhaps severe, yet satisfying character of the buildings. These are an instructive feature in themselves, apart from the immense value of a practical exhibition designed to teach the public the utility and advance of hygiene, and they clearly demonstrate to what a low pitch we in England descend in the hands of Anglo-American jobbing speculators who strew unhappy London with vast ugly provincial exhibition barns that are a blemish upon civilisation. In the grounds of the Hygiene Exhibition was a working model of the Munich *Kunstler Marionette* Theatre, an *édition de luxe* of a marionette art theatre. This theatre was really a model of a model theatre. Its decorations, the designs of the costumes, its marionettes, and the comic operas of Mozart, Offenbach, and so forth, which they performed, all contributed to a seductive artistic ensemble. Herr Brann, the proprietor, was negotiating for the transference of the theatre to London. It would certainly be a great addition to our artistic attractions. Someone ought to establish a marionette theatre in London. Such a theatre has endless things to illuminate.

This artistic spirit in architecture has been carried by Dresden into its garden suburb of five hundred houses. Hellerau justly claims to be the best of its kind in Germany. It is the first and most notable example of the garden suburb in Germany. It is wonderfully situated. Its broad, simple, comfortable lines rise and fall gently amid masses of pine-tree tops, its quiet houses moving in broad white avenues towards heights where the red roofs compose harmoniously with the growth of varied green that rises to meet them across a far-spreading

landscape in whose hollows are vaporous blues and purples, upon whose enamelled surface are reflected the pure colours of a wide summer sky. Hellerau has sprung from the experiences of Germans who have lately been taking lessons from English garden suburbs and experiments in town-planning, in order to meet the demand for similar places in Germany, where the working classes are beginning to cultivate the habit of deserting the flat for the well-designed, uniform, and economic cottage and house situated in some easily getatable Vale of Health. The choice of position, the general lay-out of the estate, the building of the houses in which a successful attempt is made to unite modern standards of comfort and hygiene with artistic standards of refinement and proportion, prove, however, that German garden suburb planners have little to learn. In fact, they have some useful information to impart.

There is a great deal of natural music at Hellerau, and it is therefore appropriate that it should be made the centre of the new synthetic movement in dancing invented by M. Jaques-Dalcroze, a distinguished musical composer and performer, formerly a professor at the Geneva Conservatoire, and now Director of the Rhythmic Gymnastic Institute at Hellerau. As this dance movement promises to make itself universally felt, the consideration of its meaning and significance, together with an examination of the Jaques-Dalcroze system of rhythmic gymnastics, will be of interest. In the first place, this dance movement is another sign that Europe is under a rhythmic spell, that people are beginning to realise the immense importance of rhythm in life, and that we are in

THE SPIRIT OF THE
DALCROZE SYSTEM
OF DANCING.



at a renascence of dancing. Something unusual has happened ; and dancing, like the Sun-Goddess Amaterasu, has emerged from the cave of neglect, and promises to give the light of her smile to the world once more. Much of late has served to quicken this ancient form of art. There has been the general classical revivals coming from Russia, as well as the many and varied exponents of Greek and Oriental dancing. Now we have the widening activity of the Dalcroze school. But the dancing of this school is not to be confused with that of other schools. It has little in common with the rediscovery of the forgotten dances of ancient Greece, or the incarnation of paganism in one form or the other. It has nothing to do with the Isadora Duncan aim of the realisation of the movements of the forms and figures on ancient Greek vases. And it is not to be compared with musical drill or calisthenics. It is, in fact, based on its own system.

The system aims to train the rhythmic sense and thus to add an immense impulse to the rhythmical life of the human body. The inventor has discovered that we all have musical rhythm in us answering to that of the universe, but very few are trained to express it. So he has provided a simple key which anyone can apply. He gives his pupils a quantity of musical notes, and leaves each pupil free to compose his or her own musical movements. In his view, every movement we make should and could be equivalent to a note of music, and, given the right note, there will be an harmonious response. If we are trained to realise these notes with the aid of music, soon we come to realise them automatically without its aid. Thus we may, if we like, learn

to move through life in compositions in which spontaneous melody and rhythm, and not mechanical, logical, or meaningless actions, are the essentials. It will be gathered that the exercises are not designed to make an intellectual demand on the pupil, but to promote self-expression through spontaneity. This is going beyond the artificialities of dancers like Genée, the classical imitations of Pavlova, Mordkin, Nijinski, Priobrajensky, Kasarvina, and others of the Russian Ballet who have set Europe pirouetting. It goes beyond Isadora Duncan, who can express herself, but cannot impart the secret of self-expression ; beyond Impressionists and Secessionists in dancing, like Maud Allen, the Sisters Wiesenthal, Myrthis, Artemis Colonna, Santen, Ruth St Denis, the Indian Mahara, Tortajada, and a score more ; and even beyond the teaching of Miss Margaret Morris, who, to judge by the work of her pupils, has made an advance on the work of Isadora Duncan. The two principles governing the scheme of movements made by the Jaques-Dalcroze pupil are :—(1) The movements of the arms are directed in precise consonance with the *beats* of the music ; they represent its metrical structure, as many distinct movements being made as there are beats in a measure. The downward movement of the arms always represents the *thesis* or strong beat of the measure. (2) The movements of the lower limbs and of the trunk follow the course of the *rhythymical structure* itself, and are adapted, by one expedient or another, to represent each unit of progression as regards *duration* expressed by the chords or by the successive notes of the melody. In this manner the various duration-factors of music—semibreves, minims,

crotchets, quavers, etc., dotted and undotted—are faithfully indicated. An *actual progression* in the music is represented by a change of feet, *i.e.* by taking a step forward; but if a chord of sustained duration occurs in the flow of the music, the time of its duration is indicated and filled up by the movements of one foot while the other remains stationary.

The four special objects to be attained :—

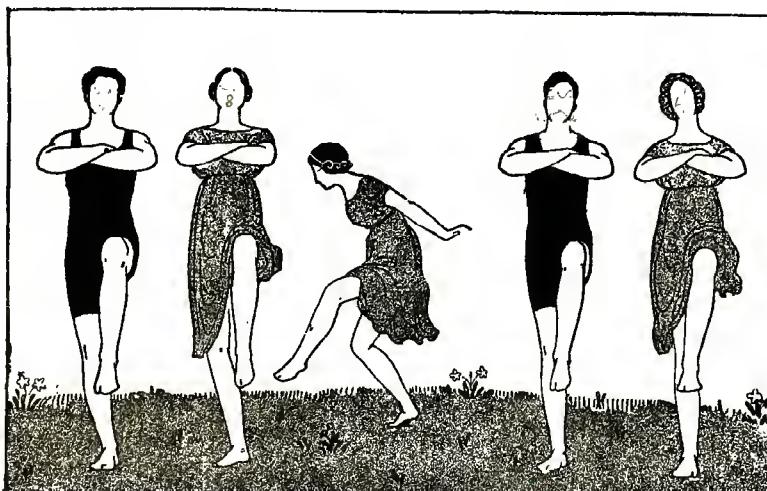
(1) Through the compulsion which the pupil is under to listen with discriminative attention to the music played during the exercises, in order that he may unravel the composition of its rhythmical structure and interpret it in his movements with precision, flexibility, and grace, *the establishment of sensibility to rhythm and its various forms is fully and permanently attained*. In the course of time, the visual, auditory, and kinæsthetic sensory systems become permeated with a sensibility which renders the entire being æsthetically responsive to this fundamental constituent of music, rhythm, thus endowing the individual with a critically appreciative power of listening not otherwise readily attainable.

(2) As a result of the mastery in practice of the two dominating principles described, combined with the use of a blackboard with staff-lines upon it, a clear and understanding knowledge is gained of musical notation, accompanied by a critical appreciation of the various kinds of notes and rests. It will be readily understood how effective a mode is thus offered of acquiring knowledge of the elements of musical theory. Young children acquire such a knowledge without experiencing any difficulty.

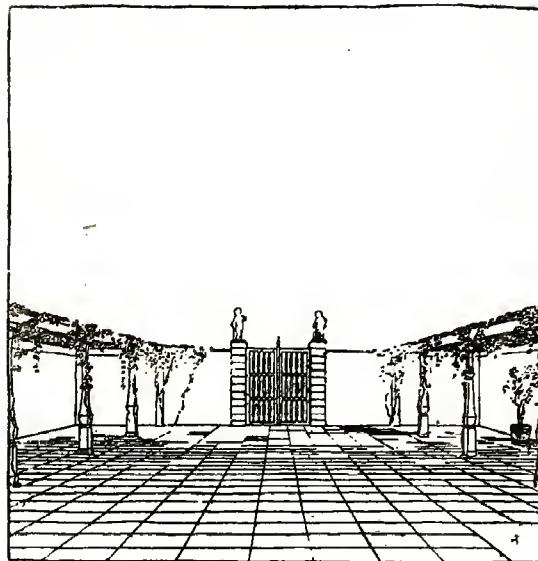
(3) The exercises, by the variety of movement demanded,

and by calling into play a very large number of muscles in all parts of the body, frequently simultaneously, involve a general activity in the neural elements constituting the motor and kinæsthetic areas of the brain. Such activity being widely distributed amongst those elements and carried on under the systematic direction of the mind, and so possessing comprehensive co-ordinating power, it must inevitably operate towards the production of a muscular and vaso-motor development both symmetrical and healthy.

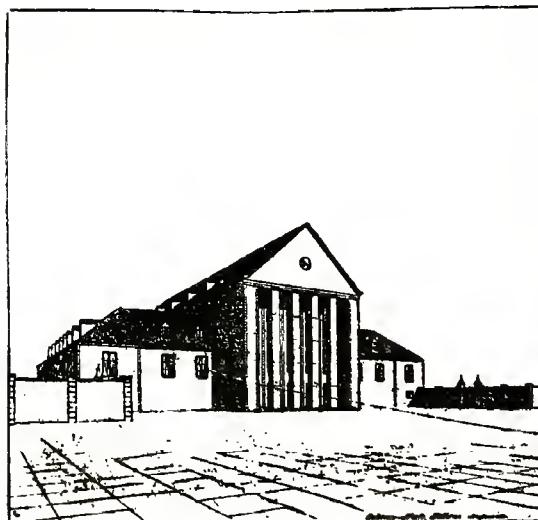
(4) The remaining object of rhythmic gymnastics is essentially a general educative one ; it refers to the ultimate realisable effect of their study, from the point of view of personal development in its fundamental aspects and stages. From this point of view the study is one of great value. The concentration of observational and executive faculty required during the exercises demands participation of the senses of hearing, of seeing, and of realisation of muscular effort under the strict control of the consciousness, the latter being absorbed, first in analysing, then in reconstructing, and finally in directing the external representation of the forms inwardly apprehended. Absolute attention for the time being is imperative, though the form of attention demanded is radically different from that usually exacted in the classroom. The latter is merely a state of passivity maintained by the consciousness while presentations of one kind and another are thrust upon it by the instructor. The attention that must be given in a lesson of rhythmic gymnastics is active and dynamic, ensuring an immediate intelligent response to whatever has been sensed.



The Dalcroze System of Dancing.



The Sun-bath.



The School.

The Dalcroze School, Hallerau.

Architect, Henrich Tessenow.

A branch of study which ensures the inculcation of a habit of attention in unison with the exercise of sensory discrimination, analytic intelligence, and æsthetic sensibility, must assuredly be of high educational value. Experience has indeed established it as a fact that rhythmic gymnastics, practised under efficient direction, do actually render the pupil more receptive and responsive in a general way.

It should be pointed out that the system is not a mere form of dancing, although it is true that the study of rhythmic gymnastics induces a bodily equilibrium, a plasticity adjusted to musical rhythm, and a general sensibility to harmony of movement, which ensure to dancing a character of uncommon expression and grace.

Musical drill is essentially formal, and tends to literality of movement, while the exercises of the system herein described compel to plasticity and spontaneity.

In the words of Monsieur Jaques-Dalcroze, "The study of artistic feelings or sensibilities, and their natural expression, create simplicity of mind and bring about the surrender of the whole being to artistic emotion. From these conditions will arise the development of the music-plastic art of to-morrow."

Such, then, are the principles and objects of the Jaques-Dalcroze system of physical movements executed to the time and rhythm suggested by the pianist and realised by each pupil. It is needless to point out how such a system appeals to children, who are perhaps more accessible to the rhythmic spell of music than adults. One of the most joyous things I have ever seen was the spacious room at Hellerau filled with sunny children, dressed only in a black tight-fitting vest,

whose unconsidered movements, responding to the chords of music, expanded, swinging out in ever-widening circles till they merged in the rhythm of the dancing sky and landscape. Body and members, inert muscles set free to the spirit of music recaptured the poses and movements of the cosmic dance. Limbs swaying here, extending there, swimming in curves, winding and unwinding in the dissolving currents of summer air, made their entrancing appeal to the senses. With the joyous processional of flushed movements dancing their way into the imagination and out again went the rhythmical and emotionalising qualities of the play instinct at its highest.

It is good to see this movement spreading. It has touched many places on the Continent. It has invaded Paris, where M. Jean d'Udine has inaugurated the new fashion of movements creating music ; it has conquered Russia. Its principles are taught in the Art Theatre of Moscow, as well as at the Deutsches Theatre, Berlin. It now asks to be permitted to bring its fine ends to England. Perhaps the forthcoming visit to London and the provinces of M. Dalcroze and his pupils will enable it to do so. At least, that is the hope of its sympathisers, and especially of Mr Percy B. Ingham, of Merchant Taylors' School, London, one of its active and enthusiastic exponents.

The revolutionary movement designed to promote the expression of the rhythmical life of mankind is bound in time to make itself generally felt. It is invading the theatre, in the form of lyrical sound, movement, and decoration, and demands a unity where hitherto there has been nothing but

separation. It would, for one thing, destroy the convention of setting a man in a forest and giving each a separate atmosphere. There is unity of the two, and this may be shown by creating an illusion of a forest bathed in the atmosphere of the man, or *vice versa*. We should be made conscious of the rhythmical expansion of the soul of the one into the soul of the other by means of speech, song, dance, music, or decoration, as the case may be. This expansion is demonstrated by the Hellerau school of dancing, and in the work of Othon Friesz, where man and nature are united by continuous lines.

In Germany the dramatic, rhythmical movement does not find itself welcomed in the State and endowed theatre. If the subsidised theatre has some advantages, it has many serious disadvantages also. Endowment has been the means of calling forth throughout Europe monumental buildings that architecturally are worthy of the finest traditions of art, and of placing these in ideal positions, like that of Dresden's Opera House, which occupies a unique position, being placed on one side of a large public square, embellished with fountains and sculpture, and supported by Dresden's National Gallery, Castle, and other fine State buildings. There is no reflection of the present London mania for erecting an endowed theatre in a back street, on an insufficient site, a totally inadequate scale, and with stupid approaches. Endowment has also fostered a system of organisation that protects the actor, mainly subsidises dead authors, and educates the public to an appreciation of the classic or static drama and opera.

In the Dresden endowed theatres the system of organisation is, however, slightly varied. At the Court Theatre,

Opera House, and Kgl. *Schauspielhaus*, the new is blended with the old. Strauss is welcomed at the former and the new author at the latter ; while the repertory play is seen at all three in unending variety. Artists are also encouraged to serve the Opera House, where some good work has been done by Otto Altenkirch. The endowed theatres may be divided into five classes. The State or static theatre is perhaps the most unprogressive. It is usually presided over by an intendant, who is paid a large salary—at Leipzig 30,000 marks a year,—and is expected to make the theatre pay, or meet any deficit out of his own pocket. He has also to keep up the reputation of the house, and to satisfy the public demand for a frequent change of bill. At the *Neues Stadt Theatre* at Leipzig I found the bill was changed every night, one deadly dull play succeeding another. As a result, with no time for rehearsals, popular plays are chosen, and startlingly new and unknown ones are neglected. The fate of untried authors is to have their plays shelved for a twelvemonth, and then returned unread. The State theatre system, organised though it is, would be unworkable as yet in England. It has taken at least a hundred years to perfect—the *Comédie Française* has existed eighty-seven years. At the rate we progress, it would take at least two hundred years to set the system going in England, by which time the millennium would have arrived—at least, if Old Moore does not book it to appear earlier.

What about the other *opéra* ?



STUDY BY
LYONEL FEININGER.

VIII

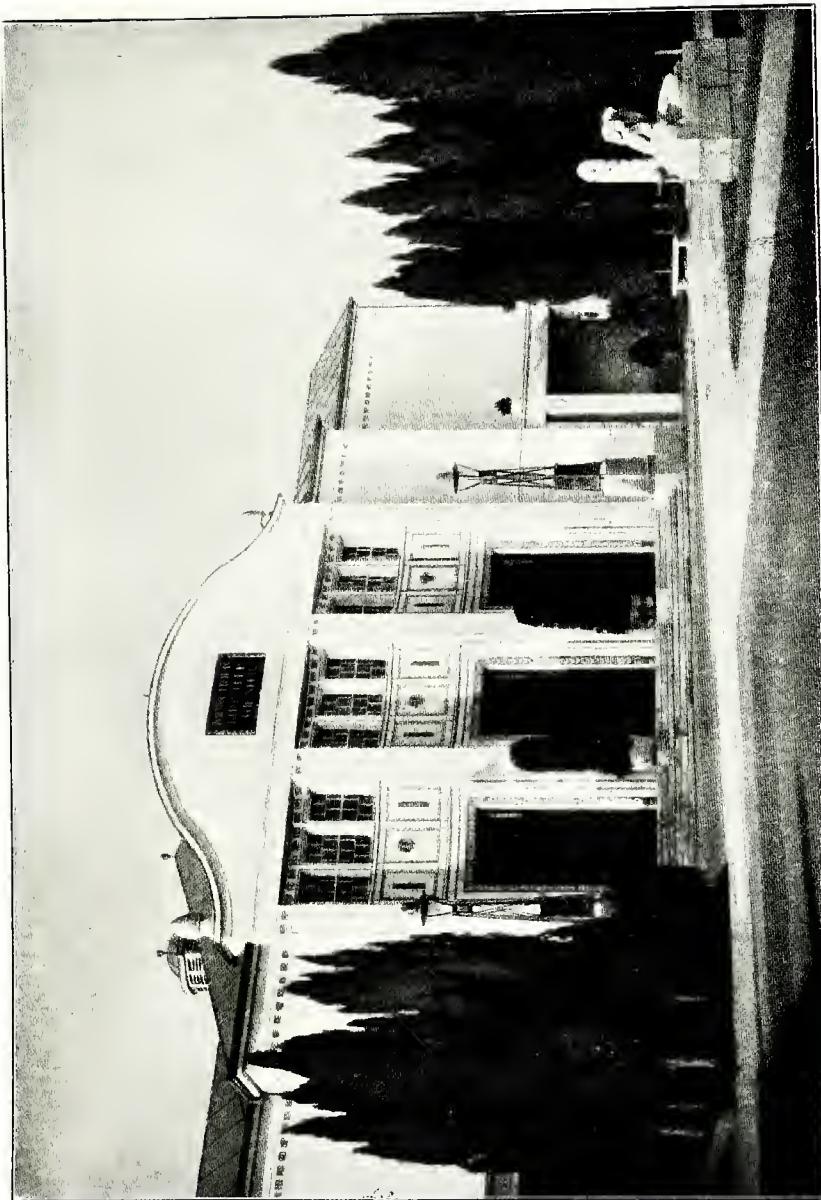
THE NEW SPIRIT IN MUNICH

The geographical significance of Munich—A culture centre—The Bavarian Secessionists—The Künstler Theatre movement—Its origin and organisation—Its influence on other theatres—The new Shakespearean stage.

THERE are a score of things in Munich one might talk about. Marked out by its geographical position for a great centre to which cultured minds from all parts of Europe would come, and, as a consequence, singularly cosmopolitan in character, the romantically situated Bavarian city is full of art and culture. There men appear to be solely concerned with culture problems. How could it be otherwise, so near to Italy, and so attractive to persons of taste and ideas? Its walls are impressed with living and provocative forms of Art and Craft. Its open spaces are cheerful with lyrics in stone, and set to the melody of flowing water. Its modern exhibition galleries are instinct with the co-operative spirit—mixed with the smell of wet paint. Munich is indeed a kind friend to all sorts and conditions of artists. One could wish it would harden its heart in this direction, and accord wall space only to sun-worshippers who affect the magic play of light in wood and cornfield, across the snow-clad Bavarian Alps, or upon waters charged with living forms. Instead of

following its usual custom of having three big exhibitions at once, it might generously boil them down to one, in which the pictures by artists who live to paint, and are compelled to exhibit, might be comfortably arranged. As it is, the Post-Expressionist visitor and critic are invited to plough through something like two hundred rooms full of the amazing productions of *Juryfreies* and the *Secessionists*. The hanging of so many exhibits may be simply an excuse for the display of the very decorative exhibition rooms with their many-coloured wall spaces. These rooms are an interesting, and perhaps a trying, feature in themselves. Each room is decorated with a separate colour—red, green, blue, violet, and so on. They form, as it were, frames for the exhibits. It is very pleasant to pass from one coloured frame to another, and to pause before long vistas down which waves of pure colour are advancing, as one room rapidly succeeds another. But the objection to this colour arrangement is that it does not add to the value of the exhibits. The effect, for instance, of the Colman's mustard room on the attenuated digestion of vegetarian visitors in paint is disastrous ; while Reckitt's blue so affects pale-pink pictures as to leave them gasping for air. In fact, these unaccustomed bright walls only add to the dirt and gloom of a great number of the exhibits, while strangely affecting the spectator with a colour temperament. Such persons on entering the yellow room are apt to be delirious for quite ten minutes.

Art moves most definitely and with force in the theatre, which here at least is a centre of artistic inspiration. The *Théâtre des Arts*, Paris, the Russian Ballets, and the *Deutsches Theatre*, Berlin, do not, then, stand alone in inspiring plastic



EXTERIOR VIEW OF THE
KÜNSTLER THEATRE, MUNICH.
(Architect, Professor W. Littmann.)

forms of art. The Künstler Theatre, Munich, is in active competition with them, both as regards being influenced by and widely influencing art. This theatre of artists is an answer to the culture problem of the theatre as dealt with fully in Professor George Fuchs' comprehensive volume, *Die Revolution des Theaters*. I would like to see this small, beautiful, practical, and complete theatre repeated in every town and city of the United Kingdom. (It is just the sort of theatre for experiment and suggestion till the new theatre arrives that a corporation could buy for a small sum—much less, in fact, than a Carnegie library costs,—erect in the public park, and exhibit to admiring visitors as a real example of progressive enthusiasm.) I do not consider it to be a permanent form of theatre. It is transitional; and with all its undoubted attractions it is but a delightful frame for small or condensed pictures. Its chief fault is that it offers no scope for expansion, and reflects the present enormous efforts in the face of immense difficulties to adapt the new setting to an obsolete type of stage. This is a variation of the impossible attempt to adapt the new ideas in art to a worn-out or unsuitable drama. Before a real advance can be made in the art of the theatre it must be recognised that according to the new standard of representation we have no drama and we have no theatre.

The Künstler Theatre proves, however, that the theatre is coming. It proves that at last men have turned their attention to the housing of the drama. Its original ideas, of which it is full, prove that acute and subtle minds are taking the old conventions one by one, placing them on the dissecting-

table, examining, testing, and rejecting them. It proves that these researchers mean to get on the right line, even though at present they may be off it. Munich has found the ideal position for its art theatre in a park bordering the city, and here it has set up a symbol of synthesis, simplification, and beauty. A synthesis of the revolutionary ideas of Messrs George Fuchs, Fritz Erler, and Professor Littmann, and an application of the modern ideas of the unity of the theatre and the drama. The modern pursuit of the mood has led to the prevalent idea that the drama should create a dominant mood in the mind of the spectator, and everything in the theatre should contribute to foster and strengthen this mood. There must be no friction. Mood is, in fact, the golden cord—the great thing.

Everything in the *Kunstler* Theatre is designed to produce a state of receptivity. Directly one sees the lyrical façade, the proper frame of mind is produced. It is strengthened by the stimulus of the interior aspects. It becomes more intense under the influence of the extraordinary artistic skill and taste displayed in the foyer and vestibules planned on so generous a scale. It is full of the essential spirit by the time the amphitheatre is reached, where the spirit of Wagner is found to be working hand in hand with the artistic movement. This amphitheatre is, in fact, the modern one which rejects the old system of circles and galleries, and was originated by Wagner in his search for sensations of unity ; and it has special features which link the *Kunstler* Theatre, the *Prinzregenten* Theatre, as well as many other theatres in Germany, with the *Festspielhaus*. Herein is Wagner's triumph. The amphi-

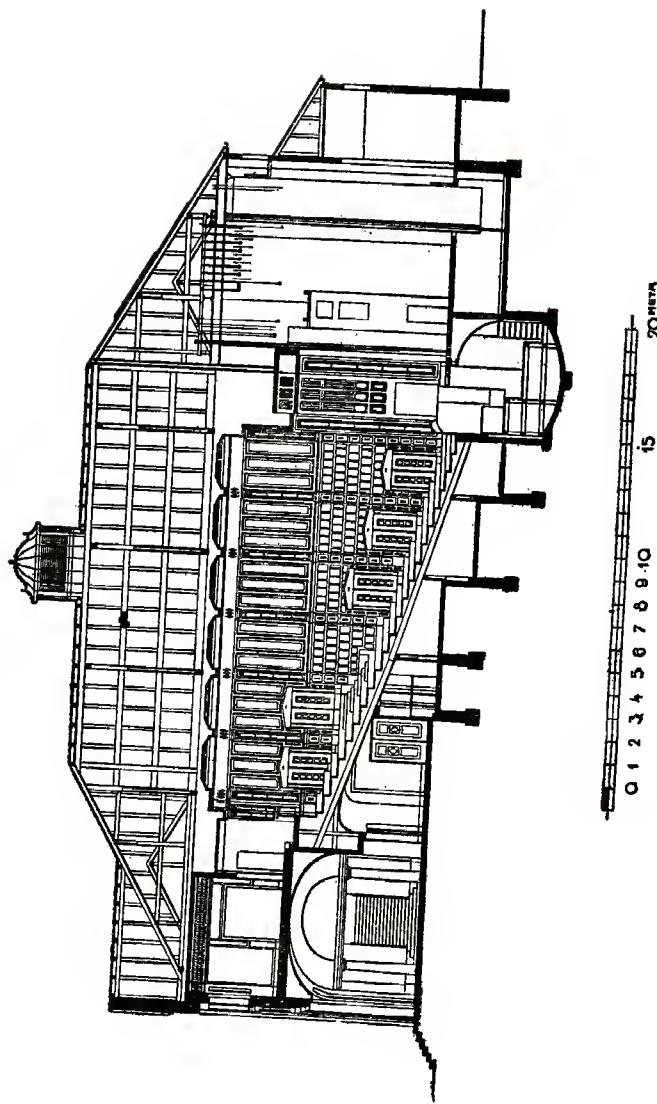
theatre is designed to remove all friction, including inappropriate attendants, and to induce a state of mental concentration in the spectator. So there are the grateful harmonies of the tinted woods, the soft glow of the crystal lights, the restful isolation of the seats rising gently to the single row of boxes, the special acoustical properties of the auditorium, and the fawning tones of the sunken orchestra (was it not the Münchener Tonkunstler Orchester ?) to complete the spell. Thus a direct communication is opened between mind and mind, between author and auditor.

Seated in comfort, I wondered whether the preliminary conditions of representation would be followed by others equally perfect ; whether from the rise to the fall of that silver-blue curtain, with its air of mysticism, it would be possible to enjoy a performance which revealed a wise solution of the problem of the elimination of friction. That is, friction in unessentials.

How does this stage deal with the problem of setting ? What new ideas does it offer ? What are the results of the search for simplification, synthesis, rhythm, and beauty ? How are its walls and the space overhead covered ? What is its system of lighting ? How are its laws interpreted by the group of distinguished decorators—(Fritz Erler, Diez, Hengeler, Engels, Schulz, H. B. Wieland, Ernst Stern, Oskar Graf, Olaf Gulbransson of *Simplicissimus* ?) How does it serve to preserve the unity of the action of the drama in co-operation with sound, colour, motion ? These are some of the questions that came to me. Such are the questions artistic revolutionaries are seeking to answer. I felt that

whatever the answers, I was about to be confronted with some interesting experiments. I was not disappointed. To begin with, I was introduced to a stage entirely cleared of all the old meaningless bits of painted canvas that pass for scenery in England. Some of the worst of the ancient methods and details of staging had been swept away. There were no dirty, discordant, dislocated borders, wings, and ground rows. No heaps of painted cloths, no flats that would not meet. Nothing out of joint. It was a return to the simplicity of the stage that Molière used and to the corresponding simple elements of setting, by an immensely improved route. A revised sensation.

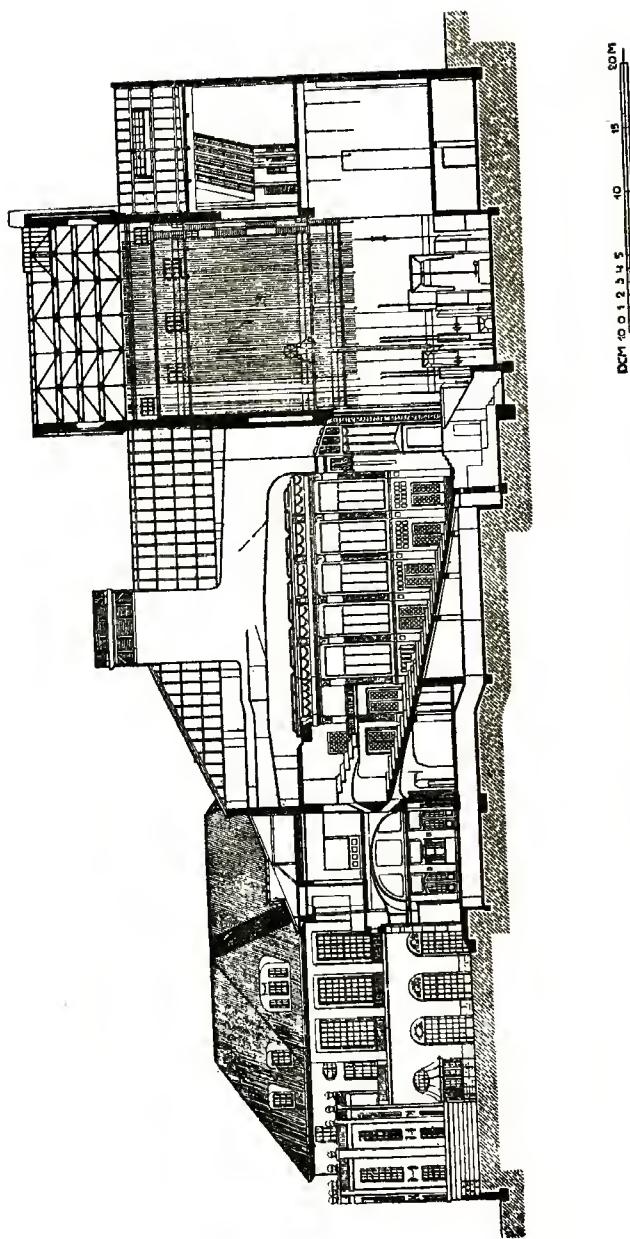
The next innovation was a rectangular proscenium opening in place of the arched one, and a careful squaring up of the stage to the size of a small picture having two dimensions and the merest suggestion of a third (the new stage dimension)—depth. For the frame an immovable wooden portal has been fitted just behind the proscenium opening. This ingenious contrivance, which consists of a top piece and two side turrets, having each a door, a window, and a balcony, serves several purposes. It completely limits the sight-line of the spectator at the top and sides of the scene, it is a decoration, and it can be adapted to any interior or exterior. Moreover, the use of this frame in conjunction with the specially constructed scenery, never consisting of more than a built-up wall or terrace thrown across the centre of the stage, does away with the necessity for wings, sky borders, and ceilings. It effectually masks the side openings, when there are any, and, together with the walls, columns, etc., which are



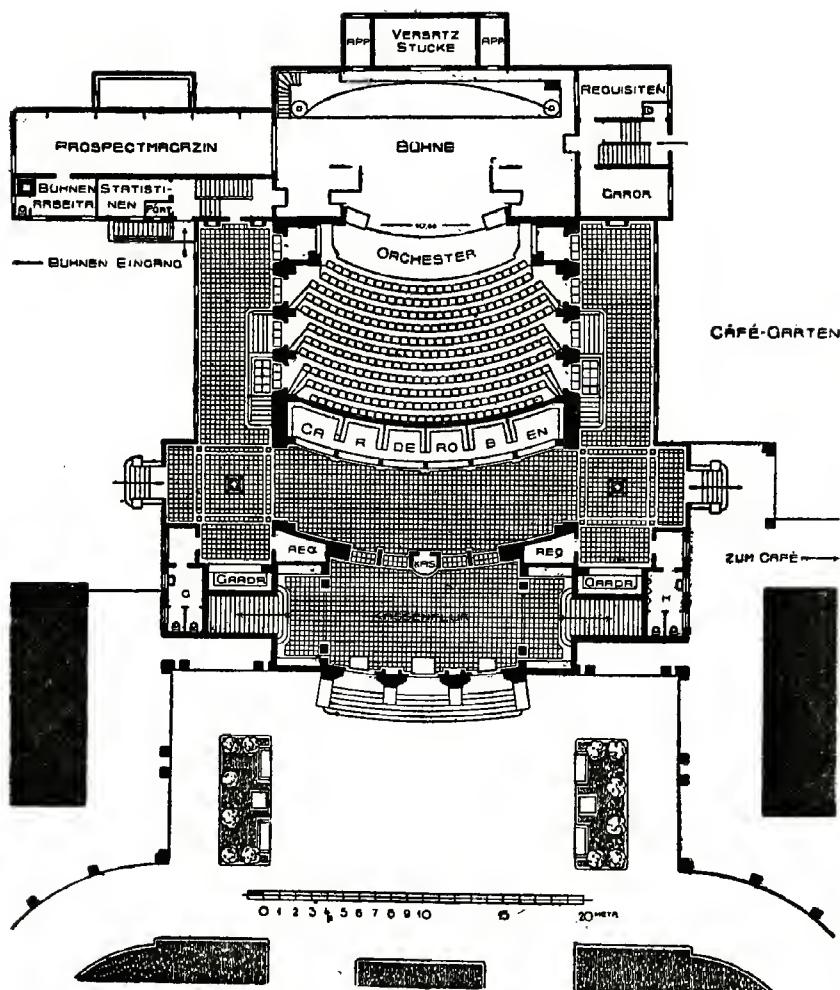
Plan of the Kunster Theatre, Manich.

134.

Architect, Prof. M. Littmann.



Plan of the *Kunstler Theatre*, Munich.
Architect, Prof. M. Littmann.



Plan of the Kunstler Theatre, Munich,

Architect, Prof. M. Littmann.

carried right up out of sight, and the admirable lighting arrangement, it helps to create the illusion of an unseen sky or ceiling. The system of lighting is overhead, and the switch-board is under the stage. There are no side lights and practically no footlights. A great deal of attention is paid to lighting the back of the stage. Another noticeable feature is the division of the scene into three—front, centre, and back. The back stage is seldom used, except for the purpose of obtaining perspective. According to a crude solution of the problem of stage perspective, distance may be preserved by not allowing the actors to approach or move immediately against distant backgrounds. Some day, when a new stage arrives, a more satisfactory solution will be found. Till then the undiminishing actor must keep away from receding landscapes. There is also a moving background for panoramic effects in the form of a backcloth run on perpendicular cylinders, worked by hand and electricity, and lit by four different colours. It will be gathered that the new system aims to reduce stage setting to the simplest proportions, and to call in the aid of suggestion in the attempt to abolish modern extravagances and over-elaboration. It has many good points, such as the power of keeping the play rapidly in motion, of pressing the action to the main point, of excluding extraneous matter, futilities of setting, or obvious padding out of the production. Indeed, it is a return to the best traditions of the stage of ancient Greece, or the finest Western conventions which admit of little else than a door or two and some beautiful draperies.

The pressing problems of lighting created for the artist

and craftsman by the necessity of things retaining their vitality in distance, of obtaining natural light and shade, general relations of tone, perspective, and so forth, were also seen to be calling forth unexpected answers. The search for natural lighting effects had led to the "scene" being lighted almost entirely overhead ; there were no side lights and but the merest suggestion of footlights. As at the Deutsches Theatre, a great deal of attention had been paid to lighting the back of the stage. The switch-board controlling the system was placed out of the way under the stage, and was controlled, in turn, by an automatic electric communicator on the stage. In order to obtain the effect of coloured surfaces seen under a natural light, the scenery was painted in monochrome and "built up" and painted for light. It was built solid, with solid projections, so that the shadows from the diffused or concentrated lighting could be as natural as possible. The scenery is, moreover, designed for simplicity and suggestion—that is, realistic suggestion. The general lines are simple and broad ; the foreground and middle distance are worked out in detail, while the background is more in mass. Suggestion is added by the Japanese never-ending device. If a castle wall, or a terrace, or a bridge is thrown across the middle-distance, it goes out of the scene left and right ; while the castle itself, the columns of a banqueting-hall, the interior or exterior of any other building, are carried right up out of sight, thus leaving something to the imagination.

Beyond this, there was noticeable a great thoroughness and economy of space in the working of the scenes and the storing of the materials. Everything not in use was com-

pletely out of the way. As much as possible, even the scenery in use, was hung up. There were no things strewn about the stage, as in the conventional theatre. All the machinery was, in fact, properly organised and in good working order.

But in spite of all this admirable arrangement one great defect was apparent, namely, that the existing type of stage was not made for this sort of economy of space, and does not lend itself to the new system of setting. On the contrary, it appears to have evolved a system peculiar to itself, necessitating the use of so much cumbersome stuff—canvas, ropes, struts, tiers upon tiers of limes, all the devices for filling holes and corners,—all of which rightly belongs to the conventional stage, as part and parcel of its peculiar development. As I sat watching the performances, some of the limitations imposed upon the new setting by the structural conditions of the old stage, and the reverse, became apparent. These performances were the Summer Festival ones, which are becoming as widely known as those at other Festival theatres. It may be mentioned that the Festival theatre idea is rapidly spreading. According to this idea, theatres are devoted to great authors and composers, such as the Prinzregenten Theatre at Munich to Mozart, the Wagner Theatre at Bayreuth to Wagner, the theatre at Weimar to Goethe, the theatre at Düsseldorf to Shakespeare, and, in England, His Majesty's Theatre and Stratford-on-Avon to Shakespeare. These Festivals attract visitors from all parts of Europe, and are mostly a form of international tribute to greatness. The Kunstler Theatre Festival was in honour of Offenbach, a number of whose sparkling operettes were being interpreted realistically by

the Deutsches Theatre Company under the direction of Professor Max Reinhardt.

The first sensation was one of tightness, the result of trying to arrange big scenes on a stage only seven metres in depth. *Die Schöne Helena*, Offenbach, Meilhac, and Halévy's comic opera, in particular, exhibited the contracting nature of the scenes. In spite of undoubtedly skilful staging of the crowds, the simple massing of groups—whose moving lines and rich sentimental colours were perfectly in harmony with those of the scenic setting—the impression of congestion remained. When the crowds came on the stage, furniture went off. Helen's bed, after a sensational love scene, finding the atmosphere too hot, slipped out to cool itself. Other similar strange things happened.) The scenes were first of all too tightly held by the decorative stationary frame ; the walls of the scenes were for ever closing in ; and the moving back-cloth refused to throw the sky back. The backcloth was the greatest sinner. It was too near the audience. All its imperfections could be seen. The fact that it sometimes had a very beautiful effect, as when it was transformed into a wonderful deep blue amorous night sky, so much in harmony with the fervour of Paris's love-making, did not alter matters. Its appearance in the last act as a white horizon was absurd. It had a great stain in one corner, as though someone had been using it as a tablecloth during the interval and had spilt the gravy on it. Thus in the same scene it left very little room for the decorative ship to come on which carried away the decorative Paris and Helen. The ship glided in seemingly wedged between the sky and the landing-stage, thus

completing the decorative scheme. Still, the interesting lines of the eloping "lugger" fitted very nicely into the space between the projecting figure and projecting column on opposite sides. The same tightness was observable in *Thermidore*, a comic opera by Digby la Touche, with fine decorations by Oskar Graf, and with less of the extraordinary sensuality which characterises *Helena*. In a word, it was clear throughout that though the new system of setting is infinitely more beautiful and impressive than the old, it is merely a system of reducing space in order to get a much-desired unity and simplicity, and therefore a device for forcing the play into very narrow proportions.

The improved system of staging at the *Kunstler Theatre*, where the newly developed picture stage is the thing, has also been adopted elsewhere, not only in Munich, but in many parts of Germany. It is embodied in the form of the new Shakespearean stage, which enables the whole of Shakespeare to be played with a column or two easily adapted to form interiors and exteriors, and a stationary or revolving backcloth and some intelligent limes. Munich may be said to have pioneered the search for Shakespearean simplicity of means of representation. A great deal of activity has gone in recent years towards the rediscovery of Shakespeare as a stagecraftsman; and, as Professor E. K. Chambers reminds us in his article on "The Stage of the *Globe*," many attempts have been made "to reconstruct a Shakespearean stage and to remodel histrionic methods, perverted by the misunderstanding of two centuries, in harmony therewith." It appears that Germany has taken a foremost part in this research work. "As far back as 1840,

Karl Immerman produced *Twelfth Night* upon a stage designed by himself for the purpose at Düsseldorf. Immerman's experiment was an isolated one, and he did not, as a matter of fact, arrive at anything very closely approaching what we can imagine a Shakespearean stage to have been. It was not until 1888 that the discovery by Dr Karl Theodor Gaedertz of a drawing of the interior of the Swan Theatre stimulated a really widespread interest in the matter. The famous Munich Shakespeare-Bühne, organised by Karl von Perfall and Jocza Savits, was opened with a performance of *King Lear* on 1st June 1889, and yielded a long series of Shakespearean and other plays up to 1905. The example of Munich was followed more spasmodically at Breslau and Prague; and at Paris, in a production of *Measure for Measure* at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre in 1898. The English Elizabethan Stage Society, under the direction of Mr William Poel, initiated its Shakespearean stage with a performance of *Measure for Measure* in 1893, and endured until 1905. In America, the Department of English of Harvard University built an Elizabethan stage for a revival of Ben Jonson's *Epicæne* in 1895, and rebuilt it in accordance with the latest research for Mr Forbes Robertson to play *Hamlet* upon in 1904. It must, of course, be borne in mind that these ventures, with the possible exception of the Harvard one, were conceived in the interests of histrionic reform rather than in those of pure archæology. The objects are related, but ought not to be confused. The representation of Shakespeare's plays in the modern theatre has no doubt come to disaster, partly owing to the substitution after the Restoration of a picture-stage for a platform-stage, and partly

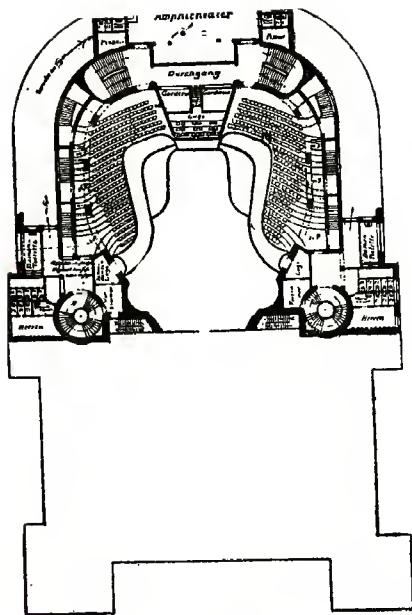


Fig. I.

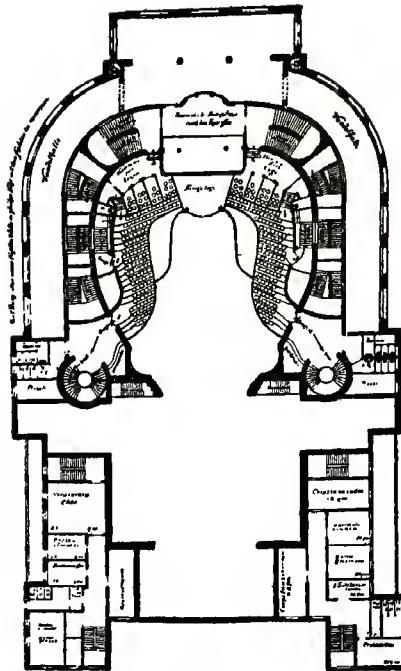


Fig. 2.

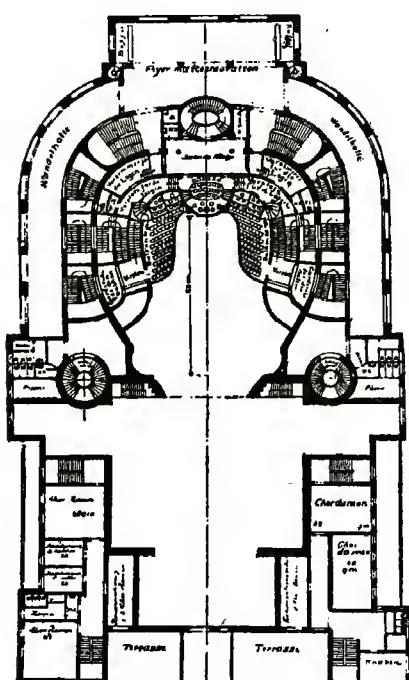


Fig. 3.

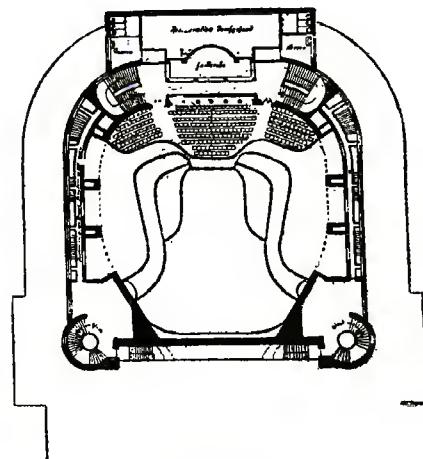


Fig. 4.

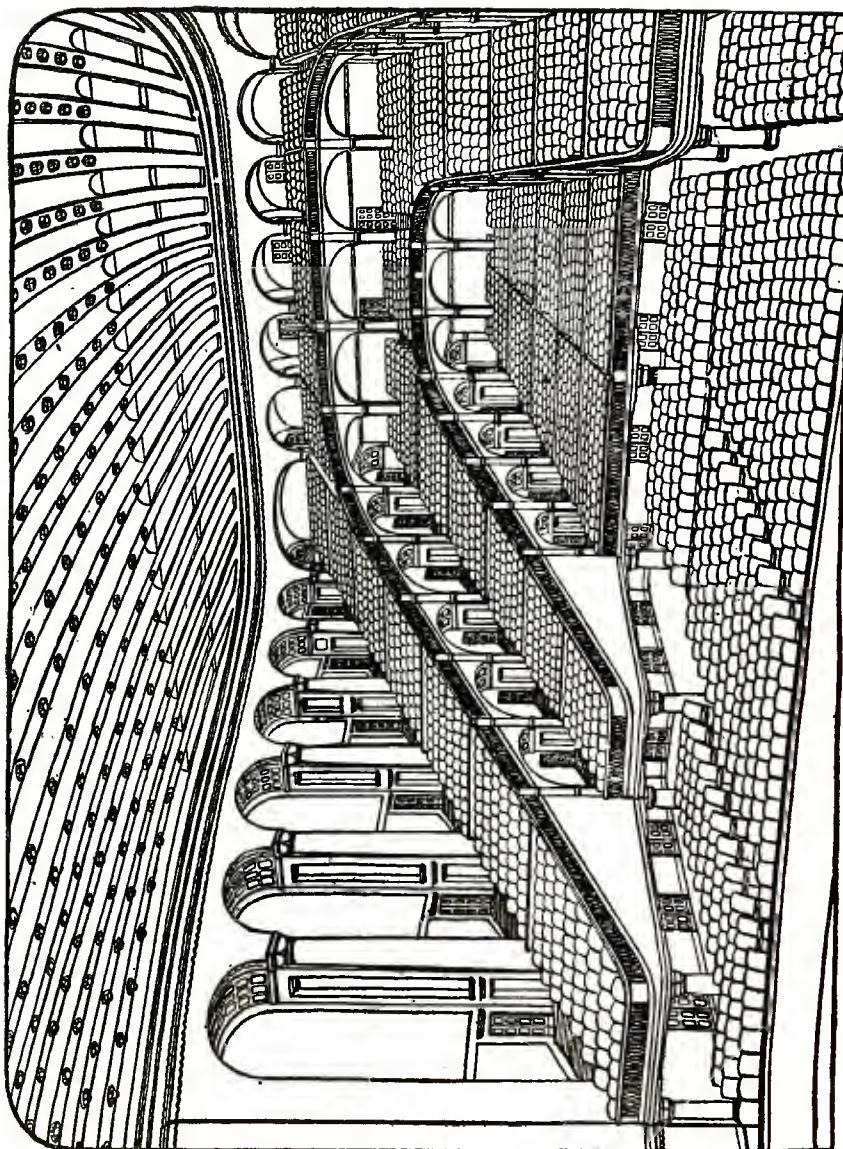
Designs for a Zehschen Theatre.

Fig. 1.—Horizontal Section through Auditorium above the Third Circle.

Fig. 2.—Section above the Second Circle.

Fig. 3.—Section above the First Circle.

Fig. 4.—Section above the Amphitheatre.



Auditorium of the Rohe-Zehschen Theatre, Munich : Theatre of the Five Thousand.

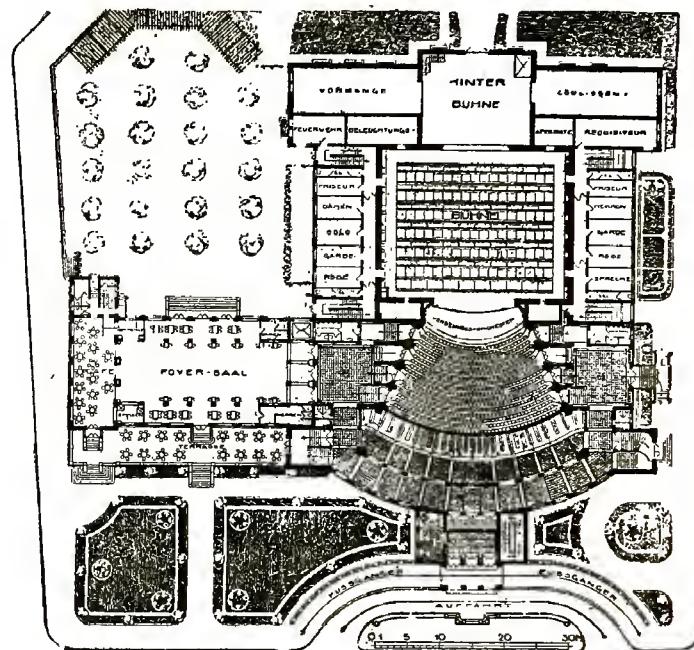
Architect, A. Zeh.

owing to the bad taste of nineteenth-century stage-managers, notably Sir Henry Irving and Mr Beerbohm Tree, who have persisted in elaborating scenic effects along lines of cost rather than of beauty, with results to the structure and movement of the plays no less ruinous than the havoc wrought by eighteenth-century adapters upon their texts." It should be noted that Herr Savits is a believer in the non-scenic Shakespeare, and his stage was designed to present Shakespeare without scenery. He regards scenery as a hindrance to the drama, and has written a solid treatise, *Von der Absicht der Dramas*, to prove his point. His championship of the non-stop Shakespeare is not, however, very convincing. Another Shakespearean stage has made its appearance, which is being used by Dr Klein.

The influence of the Munich Künstler Theatre was noticeable in several directions. It had, in particular, invaded the Schauspielhaus, where Mr Frank Wedekind was busy producing his plays dealing with the sexual question, with the new staging effects. This is an age of novelties, and not the least among them is this ugly subject of sex tricked out in beauty. The Künstler Theatre is also contributing to the general movement in the theatre in co-operating in the aims of *Die Szene*. This is a weekly publication, and the official organ of the Society of Artistic Stage Producers in Berlin, and is published by "Die Drei Masken," a publishing firm which is organising a central information bureau for matters concerning the Art Theatre.

An important contribution to the housing of the drama is to be found in the Zehschean Theatre. Herr Zeh, a

Munich architect, and Dr Rohe have invented and patented a theatre with a new form of auditorium. The structure is called the "Theatre of the Five Thousand," thus materialising Professor Reinhardt's idea. Further reference to the Rohe-Zehsche project will be found in the supplementary chapter.



Architects, Heilmann and Littmann.

Plan of the Prince Regent Theatre, Munich. Built 1900-1901.

IX

THE NEW SPIRIT IN VIENNA

City development and the architectural renascence—The Imperial Art and Craft School of Vienna—Its widespread influence—The art of the theatre movement—Music tendencies.

“VIENNA’s dead at this season. You’ll find nothing there to interest you,” someone said to me at Munich. I replied, “I shall go, all the same. I am not going to miss that bit of unmatchable scenery on the Danube between Passau and the ‘dead city.’” The music of the romantic stretch of scenery between Passau and Linz is full of the bewildering spirit of the ages. The spirit which has come to us on winged aspiration, and which will pass from us as achievement. It informs the moving panorama of vast hills pressing in eagerly on both sides, projecting unsuspected welcoming arms, and pursuing in a mist of melting green. It embalms the form of watchful castles perched like eagles on inaccessible heights, and of quaint towns and villages set like gems on the sinuous silver-grey band of river.

Compared with the life of the waterway, Vienna was indeed dead. Blinds were down everywhere, theatres were closed, the public gardens, walks, and institutions were deserted. That modern crawling phenomenon, the tip-extorting waiter,

was on the verge of suicide. But, though socially dead, signs were not wanting that Vienna was alive in other directions. There was no question of the activity in architecture. The city appeared to be overrun with new buildings. It was positively bursting into forms, some of them showing a great advance in beauty of architectural design, and some being merely bad copies of old forms. There was, for example, the new post-office, the Postparkasse, an extraordinary affair. It had something very fine and original about its planning and construction. The bigness of scale contributed materially to its dignity and impressiveness, while every part of it had been carefully considered from a point of view of utility and hygiene. Then, again, its cool Carrara-marble walls were very pleasing, and the extensive use of glass and aluminium was quite successful. But that exterior aspect, Italian in character, with the flat surface broken up into squares and studded with aluminium buttons, giving it the appearance of the riveted plates of a man-of-war—what a shock to the conventional !

It appeared that it was Professor Wagner's work. Professor Wagner is the father of the new school of Viennese architects that sprang into existence when the Emperor demolished the fortifications and constructed the magnificent ring of boulevards which girdle the city's waist. These boulevards were part of a great and comprehensive scheme of city development and embellishment outlined under the direction of the Emperor Francis Joseph half a century or so ago. According to this scheme a large area covered by walls, moats, and so forth was reclaimed and laid out for park areas, the great ring-strasse, public buildings, monuments, and so forth, and

so successfully treated that it remains to-day one of the most uniform and imposing examples of artistic city development in Europe. The area being intelligently planned admits of constant improvement and expansion. The magnificent Vienna ring-strasse has served as a model for similar ring boulevards throughout the cities of Europe. Such boulevards contain from four to six roadways, bridle-paths, and footways, appropriately lined with trees, and forming avenues embellished with fountains, statuary, and monuments.

The school of architects includes Professors Hoffman, Moser, and Czastka, men who are doing brilliant work in various directions. I saw samples of Professor Hoffman's domestic architecture, and most individual and charming they were. It was worth coming to Vienna merely to visit the villa colony at Hohe Worte. To me it was like walking through a select gallery containing about a score of original pictures, each one individual in itself, but all stamped with the strong individuality of the creative mind. I was fascinated by the experiments in brick and stone and plaster, and found myself marking an imaginary catalogue rather heavily in favour of Villas Moll, Ost, Branner, Hochstetter, and Seewald. Yes, the dozen or so houses were good, nicely proportioned, full of contrasting features, really artistic shells that might grow naturally round artistic persons. I can understand such persons demanding breadth and simplicity of design, original lines, and a combination of line and colour in harmony with an environment of trees and a magnificent stretch of hilly country. Then they would expect that unity of walks, flower-beds, hedges, walls, charming miniature

trellised arbours, etc., and this notwithstanding the objection of the gardener to the unnatural arrangements arising from conformity to the architect's ideas.

In all this I found clear evidence of a live Art and Craft movement. A great deal of the work done at this Villa Colony proved, indeed, to be the outcome of the activities of the Wiener Werkstatte and Wiener Keramische Werkstatte. These are Art and Craft organisations which are working along progressive lines. The latter in particular is doing admirable work, realising the ideas and designs of Professor Loffler and Powolny. I remember visiting one of its workshops, where among the attractions was a showroom, a little gem in its way, designed by Professor Hoffman, and decorated with cases full of figures made by the workshop, really beautiful in colour and design. Any one of these is a decoration in itself. But to me the chief interest was the spirit of co-operation which is so strongly reflected not only in this Art and Craft workshop, but in the entire art and art industrial system of Austria. The principles of organisation and administration of this system were explained to an admiring British audience at the third international congress for the teaching of art and drawing held in London in 1908. The Austrian Government has done what it can to reform the industrial educational system, and has been successful in opening numerous industrial and supplementary schools, largely owing to its sound organisation and adequate financial support. Like other progressive European nations, it recognised the necessity of moving hand-in-hand with the far-reaching industrial and social revolution of the nineteenth century so broadly affecting the conditions of life,



A PLASTER MODEL
OF THE ROHE.
ZEHSCHEN THEATRE
AUDITORIUM.



THE OPEN-AIR THEATRE AT OBERAMMERGAU.

Reproduced by courtesy of the late W. T. Stead.

of manufacture and trade, and in so doing came into line with enlightened nations that are preparing for the age of brains which is to supersede the age of brawn. It saw it could no longer afford to leave the technical training of its working classes to chance or private initiative, but must prepare them systematically to meet the demands increasingly awakened by the growing influence of educational science in trade, and would thereby be in less danger of falling behind in the struggle for European supremacy than nations that are content to muddle through on the old unscientific industrial conditions.

The history of the development of industrial education is the history of the growth of the spirit of co-operation. The spirit is strongly manifested in the Art and Craft schools, and it is a good sign that the leading teachers at the Kunstgewerbeschule are invading all forms of public life. There is Professor Roller, the director of the above school, for instance, decorating the music-drama. His settings for Wagner's *Twilight of the Gods* at the Imperial Court Theatre were very interesting, though not so simple and suggestive as the music symbolism requires.

The decorative movement is very strongly felt in Vienna. It has given birth to the Vienna Theatrical Costume and Scenic Studio, forming a centre for the Viennese school of theatrical design. The Studio is under the direction of Professor Lefler, and does most if not all the work for the Royal Opera House. Its efforts to reproduce beauty on the stage are largely on the lines of those already mentioned in connection with the Künstler Theatre, Munich, which is actively engaged putting frames on stage pictures. Considered

technically, the work of the school is thorough in the extreme. There is an unceasing search for simplicity and correctness, for realistic beauty of colour and line. It is largely concerned with the present attempt to obtain the effects of direct light and cast shadows, and is making interesting experiments in painting and lighting scenery, in order to get the effect of coloured surfaces seen under natural lighting.

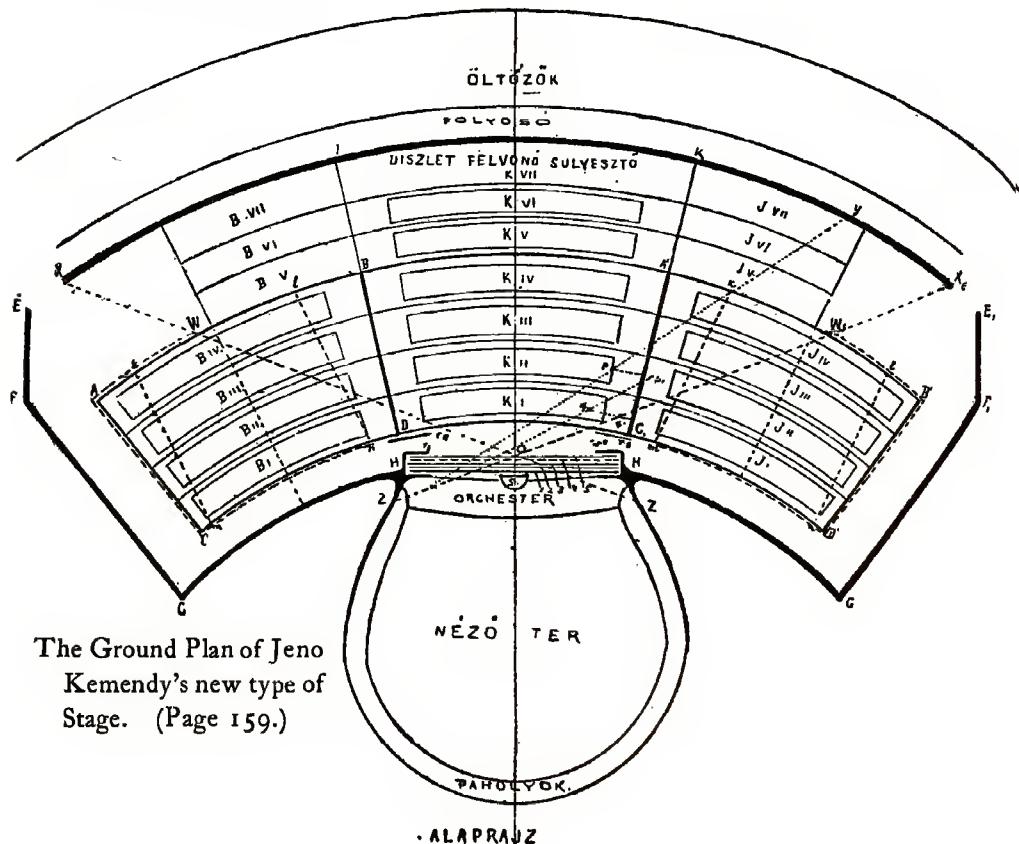
It has discovered that a coloured surface seen under daylight is not the same seen under artificial light, and it is striving to remove the difference by a juxtaposition of tones similar to that found in the canvases of the French Expressionists. It believes in the use of "built-up" scenes, and flat surfaces painted in monochrome for light, rather than with light and shadow. It has invented an ingenious time-saving device, consisting of a room composed of panels with a different pattern on each side, which can be reversed without affecting the doors, windows, and so forth. It has also re-discovered the rather ancient device for obtaining the effect of a mirror, consisting of a piece of gauze stretched across an opening, with a dummy panel placed behind it. The noticeable feature of the work of the Studio is the striving to overcome the utterly false character of scenery manufactured to order in the ordinary scene-painter's workshop.

The rage for decoration in Vienna makes rather for prettiness than for unity or mood. Thus the decorated Viennese interiors exhibited at the Autumn Salon in Paris, though full of interesting details, were not together. Each was the work of a group of art craftsmen working separately and not together. Instead of each interior being arranged

according to a uniform plan, it was made up of artistic tit-bits. The Viennese theatre exhibits the same fault. It takes no account of the fact that when the artist creates in a certain mood, everything in a play must be part of that mood. All material objects are symbols of it, and should be used accordingly. Thus, in a scene, all the objects, chairs, tables costumes, etc., should go to build up and visualise the mood and nothing should be included but what belongs to it and adds to its full expression. This is a principle which must be understood and followed. That it is not understood or followed was clear to any person who saw the production of the *Anatol* dialogues by Snitzler at the Palace Theatre, London. In these were shown pictures of typical Viennese interiors containing Viennese characters having realistic colour and line, but lacking definite beauty of design.

In discussing Vienna's musical tendencies with a Viennese, one or two points of interest came out. I pointed to the present development of the waltz tune and the manufacture of the finished article by Leo Fall in his music factory in Vienna, and ventured the opinion that, in spite of the new commercial element, Vienna was still very musical. It knows what good music is. It does not crave for sensationalism. "That is why it refuses to have Strauss," I continued. "It banished his *Salome* to the Burg Theatre, where Shakespeare is perfectly represented. *Electra* was late reaching here, but no one seemed to think it was worth waiting for. *Feuersnot* did not cause any wild excitement. Perhaps the book was too stupid for the Viennese, or they do not care for extremely short operas. Or maybe they are too fond of

Schubert. I mean fond of his songs. His operas are no good ; they have not an ounce of dramatic merit. Being fond of Schubert, they naturally demand beautiful melodies. Then they are beginning to ask for Bach. Surely this is a sign that the big wave sweeping over Europe has reached Vienna. Everywhere people are growing tired of mere cleverness and technical skill. The gymnastics of brain no longer satisfy them. They demand music, demand the restoration of beauty in music, demand the emotional element which some modern composers are neglecting. So casting away the pearl of great price."



The Ground Plan of Jeno
Kemendy's new type of
Stage. (Page 159.)

X

THE NEW SPIRIT IN BUDA-PESTH

Orientalism touched by Viennese influences—Effect on civics—Buda-Pesth cafés, public buildings, and places of amusement—The Friction Theatre—A new Hungarian school of painting—A new type of stage—Neo-Shakespearean activities—Experiments in Shakespearean methods of stagecraft.

BETWEEN Buda-Pesth and Cracow is the romantic frontier station, Zakopane, where one pauses a moment to assimilate the Orientalism of the one and to find a fitting prelude to the artistic longings of the other. It is here, raised to heights against the divided blue, one may contemplate the hothouse of Hungarian passion, and it is here one meets the Polish artist spread-eagled against all horizons, morning, noon, night, partaking of his annual banquet of nature. The banquet is good. Mountain lakes and streams turned to wine of flame and gold, and the manna of sun-stained or constellated skies showered upon scented waves of fawn and green. Those that desire more substantial fare may have the benefit of the Zakopane hotels for the purpose. From Zakopane one may see the fierce fire of Orientalism beating down upon the Hungarian capital, opening up avenues of passionate expression to which we cold-blooded Northerners are strangers. Indeed,

in England we eliminate passion, we paint the essential facts of life in neutral tones, we stifle our sensations in strait-waistcoats. Buda-Pesth expresses its passion in various ways. In love and hate, but never in logic. Perhaps the lack of logic accounts for the difference of opinion concerning its true inwardness. There are some persons who will swear it is a second Paris ; others regard it as the centre of the vegetative intellect. According to these, it is but half civilised, half developed, a mixture of dirt, destitution, and disease. Yet it is not without State enterprise. It has solved the bread problem, and taken a lead in the treatment of the child criminal, poor-law relief, and afforestation.

Someone remarked, "What you see in Buda-Pesth is merely external. The city itself is a huge melon, gorgeous without, but hollow and watery within." Another called it "glittering and rank as a sunflower." I accepted the opinions without comment. I was far too interested at the time gathering sensations from the procession of picturesque old towns and villages along the Danube, which seemed to have stepped out of the canvases of Max Suppantzschitch, Oskar Grill, and Eduard Zetsche, to mind the significant sensation of a far-away city. Besides, it was impossible to turn my attention from the wonderful relays of lethargic peasants, the rhythm of their slow life and movements, and the glow of colour from their costumes, complexions, and commodities, as they boarded the boat and sat and frizzled in the burning sun. Then some of the quaint characteristic things that unfolded gently on the long silver grey wing of the river—the detached villas with their poultry-runs, glued

A NEW TYPE OF STAGE.



CONVENTIONAL SETTING.



LOHENGRIN.

NEW SETTING.



CONVENTIONAL SETTING.



THE FLYING DUTCHMAN.

NEW SETTING.

on the stern of immense barges, and the quaint river flour-mills in mid-stream, both solving the problems of no rent and perpetual motion—these also were arresting.

It was not till we had glided through the wide fissure of the last circle of steep mountains, and Buda-Pesth came in sight, a mass of glimmering light, like a bar of fire separating two moonlit tombs, the receding and advancing, that the question of its real character became of importance.

It is the custom of certain ambitious Continental cities to give themselves the sub-title of Paris. It was the turn of Buda-Pesth to do the same. But when the curtain rose, so to speak, on the city, one saw at once it was not the eternal Paris, but the plaster-of-Paris we are accustomed to see on the stage, with a good deal of over-extravagance and animalism left in and a good deal of essential life and stimulation left out. The nature of the social performance may be summed up in a single word—sensuality. It is a series of displays of opulence and poverty. It introduces one to a city of glorified cafés and banks. Nowhere in the world are there such decorated interiors where you may sip your coffee, read the *Times*, and listen to the finest music. Nowhere such decorated exteriors of marble and metal, dedicated to insurance and exchange. Nowhere such a jumble of modern architecture. Nowhere, except in Russia, such badly paved and neglected thoroughfares. Nowhere so many women casual labourers, so many bare feet, so much improvidence and indifference. Nowhere so many love affairs, divorces, and suicides. Nowhere such a human kaleidoscope as the peasants pour in from outlying districts, Czechs, Servians, etc., filling the city

with splashes of amazing and individual colour. Then there is old Buda seated like a wonderful bird of romance on the opposite bank of the river.

There are many other singular things. Scattered throughout Buda-Pesth are places of entertainment answering to the general title of Friction Theatre. They are the antithesis of the Wagner Theatre. If there is any attempt to preserve mood, that mood must be one of eating and drinking. In the Friction Theatre the whole of the seats in the amphitheatre and circles are replaced by little dining-tables. Each table accommodates four persons, and its price varies with location. Thus Plutus and his ladies are housed in a row of nice little pens next to the orchestra, and are thus favoured between the courses with a close and fairly uninterrupted view of the persons on the stage, and thereby enabled to form a better independent literary or ordinary opinion of unblushing nudities than the common persons browsing in the background. Needless to say, the quick-lunch theatre is alive with friction devils. The feeding commences with the rise of the curtain and continues uninterruptedly to the fall, and it is uncertain throughout whether the programme is a series of demonstrations of the histrionic talents of the performers or of the gastronomic talents of the members of the audience. Whether there is anything of interest going on upon the stage it is really impossible to tell. The chief item is a contest between the waiters with large heads, hands, and feet and the funny men on the stage to get into the sight-line first and remain there. The waiters always win. If the former occupy the stage, the latter occupy the attention, and buzz

round you till either you order beer or give way to Oriental language. Besides the waiters, there are the smells to interrupt the natural order of things. They are a numerous body. I counted ninety-nine, pungent, and apparently belonging to an organised body. From the various assortment it was no use making a selection. They are all down for turns, and they all mean to come on at once. And they do. Their chorus is, "Can you breathe?"

The audience is another source of deep and pure irritation. There is no mistake about its intention. One can see it has come to use the entertainment as a digestive, and that it is entirely independent of all other medical resources. So it washes down the gross sensuality of certain scenes with glasses of the best; waves its soup spoon deliriously when the semi-nude young dancing person blesses its bouillon with her naked legs; swallows its entrée with infinite zest what time the comedians on the stage spit at each other. (Spitting is a favourite form of fun with the Hungarian comedy-makers.) In these and many and varied other ways it demonstrates its ability to accept and enjoy the whole thing as one demnition chew, as Mr Mantilini would say. As for the "turns," their business appears to be of a supplementary nature. Their comic extravagances are clearly designed to make the waiters look happy; their lugubrious jokes are arranged so as to permit the audience to perform the double function of eating and laughing at the same time; the aim of the priceless gems of the star comique is rather practical than æsthetic. Under the guise of rollicking humour it is really a device to make people drink.

The tendency of the refreshments to follow the entertainment and to join in the various demonstrations of mirth and tears does not allow one to follow the programme, which is generally three-fourths boredom, or to see who's who on the Friction variety stage. In fact, one is obliged to see with one's ears, with the result that one makes many strange discoveries. One discovers, for instance, that all the voices are not Hungarian, but that some of them have travelled from Boston and the Old Kent Road in company with the six omnipresent English or American girls who are to be met everywhere in the universe kicking up their legs, simpering at the audience, and making strange noises in their throats. Go where you will, to Paris, Frankfurt, Rome, Berlin, Constantinople, even to the Coliseum at the North Pole, and there you will find the inseparable six. And they all do the same thing, and the Frictionists love it and clamour for more.

A further frictional feature is contained in the spirit of camaraderie existing between the "turns" and the audience. Throughout the performance the former continually stop in the midst of their songs or patter for a few minutes' private conversation with the conductor or audience. Sometimes the talk takes the form of a discussion, and for the moment it is almost impossible to decide whether one is in a Hungarian theatre or taking part in one of the Stage Society's receptions held between the acts, when everybody receives everybody else and the noise resembles that of feeding-time at the Zoo. The origin of the custom of encouraging the "turns" to converse with the audience is not clear. Probably it is meant



to give the underpaid artistes opportunities to recover from the effect of the sight of so much food and drink at once. It is noticeable, too, that occasionally one of the waiters drifts on to the stage to take part in a scene. This is really a wise precaution on the part of the management. For it would be hopeless to attempt to preserve order with imitation waiters on the stage and real ones in the auditorium. There would be a riot. The final source of irritation is to be found in the theatre itself. The "house" is decorated according to the new and elaborate ideas coming from Austria and elsewhere. Its white-and-gold walls, adorned with fanciful classical devices, such as Greek gods and goddesses, and mythical animals having no relation to those in the Ark, are not at all bad. But, unfortunately, the decorations do not preserve the personality of the theatre. To be correct they should present scenes in the life of the God of the Alimentary Canal. The god himself might be represented seated on a barrel of Pilsener, eating the far-famed German sausage, and crowned with a wreath of tripe and onions. A modern touch might be provided by introducing the beer-wenches of the München Löwenbräu-Keller, each bearing twenty or so litres of foaming beverage, and circling gracefully round Alimentary Canal. A swarm of Barbary apes, to whom the women are chattering vivaciously, would complete the allegory. If I have noticed the facts of the Friction theatre at some length it is because I perceive a possibility—not altogether remote—of its introduction into this country. So far I have had a belief in the establishment of one form of theatre only—the Art theatre. But I am now converted to the view of the desirability of

the establishment of another form. There is a class of public that never ceases eating and drinking. This class should have its own theatre, where it would be properly supplied with food, drink, digestives, narcotics, newspapers, phonographs, and waiters, and would thus cease from troubling intelligent playgoers.

Buda-Pesth is saying one or two interesting new things in art. It has a new school of artists, whose work is quite among the best in painting in Europe. It reveals a freshness and spontaneity that makes the work of some of the advanced spirits look academic in comparison. I shall refer to it elsewhere.

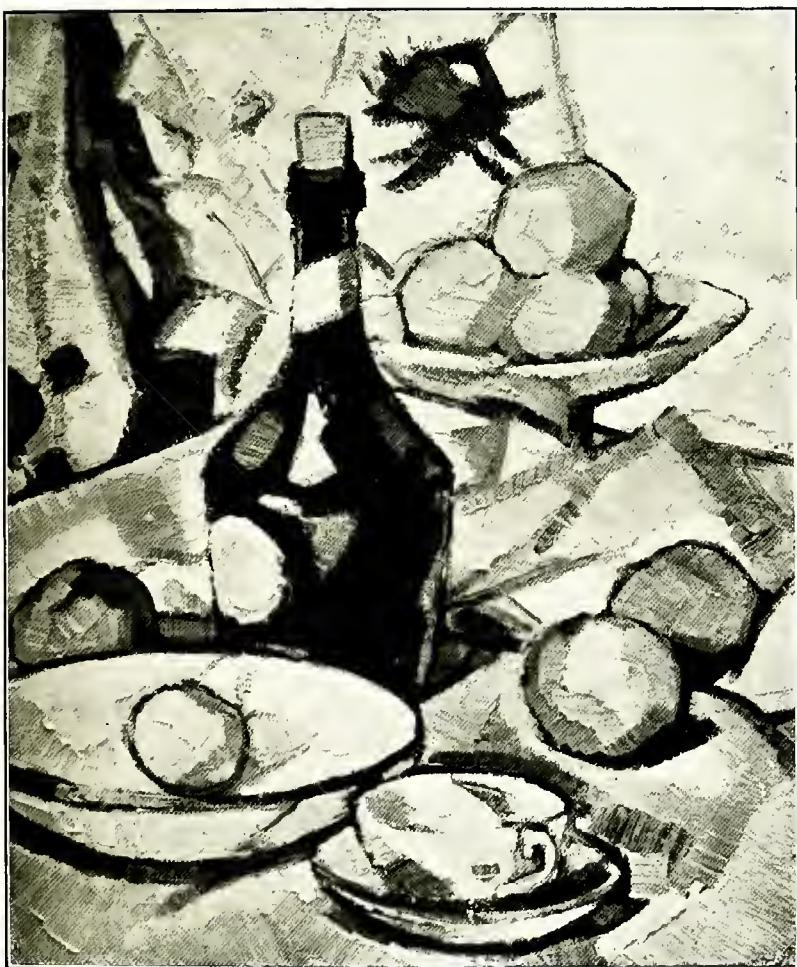
In Buda-Pesth another definite step has been taken towards the artistic evolution of the theatre. It introduces the much-desired element of expansion, and enables the stage to reach the larger freedom of simplicity, unity, and movement, instead of being cramped by the system which is being developed elsewhere. It is important to note that the advance has been made by one who understands stagecraft, having had an enormous practical experience as the scenic inspector of the Royal Opera House and the National Theatre, Buda-Pesth, and who combines with artistic ideas a remarkable power of dealing with mechanical problems. The combination is rare, but extremely necessary to the new work of the theatre. If this fact were more generally recognised, things would move faster. But it is not so recognised. Because thoughtful persons are accustomed to call the revolutionary movement in the theatre an artistic one, less thoughtful persons have the bad habit of imagining,

therefore, that none but wholly artistic spirits are capable of dealing with the complex problems involved in giving effect to the new principles. As a common result, they exalt the artist where the mechanician ought to be. And the artist, blind to his own limitations, usually pans out in public dinners, denunciations, and tears. Mr Jeno Kemendy is the type of practical reformer who gets something done. As a proof of this I wish it were possible to send a working model of his invention on tour in England. I am not suggesting it should be talked about, but tried. Let it be taken into every large theatre where either Shakespeare or Wagner or some other imaginative composer or author is in residence, and allowed to demonstrate what an immense aid has been discovered to the emotional statements of life, and to the expression of the big sensation from the big effect. How much, in fact, has been done to restore the stage to the world of imagination.

There would be, indeed, no need for it to be talked about. The story of its conception and the method of its construction are plainly enough stamped on the work. One can see that the inventor once grew tired of taking off his hat to the old conventions of the stage. He had, in fact, noticed not only the disturbing effects of all the top-hamper, the wings, and bits of painted wood and canvas that cumber the established stage, but the extreme difficulty of obtaining big natural effects in a space narrowed down to stupid proportions by a square mass of projecting scenery. His observation revealed that (1) it is impossible to set a good landscape on the existing stage, seeing that the stage is constituted to falsify every form of landscape. (2) Stage pictures are bound to be

mannered and unnatural, and crowd effects inartistic. (3) The setting of the scenes occupies much time, and the decorations and properties are, as a rule, exposed to rough handling. (4) A reform of the present stage lighting is possible. (5) The existing stage is not fire-proof. (6) Owing to the narrowness of the entrances and exits, it is not possible to bring on a large crowd with any degree of naturalness.

From these considerations arose Mr Kemendy's idea of a new stage. It was no use compromising with the old structure; there was nothing else to do but to sweep it bodily away. In the contemplation of the new structure it is possible to trace the development of the idea. Obviously, after throwing overboard the impossible cumber of the traditional stage, he has asked himself the question, "How can I cover these walls and the top opening in a simple, dignified, and natural manner? That is my task. First, how can I cover the back wall, which is suffering from two evils—the primitive hanging backcloth on the one hand, and the more progressive revolving backcloth on the other? The latter is really useless. It refuses to remain taut, and requires too much handling and too much time to change. Suppose I try a permanent structure in the form of an immovable wall. This could be made to envelop the back of the stage, and if sufficiently high and wide would limit the sight-line of the spectator. It could be prepared to receive any lighting effect, and would mask the space up stage usually occupied by scenery stacks. As very little scenery will be required for my new stage, the space thus gained could be set apart for dressing-rooms—a far more convenient and economical



STUDY BY
S. J. PEPLOE.

arrangement than the old one of banishing actors under the stage or spreading them all over the house, and in some cases putting them to dress on the roof with the immortal gods. Moreover, in view of the introduction of quick changes of scenery it is absolutely necessary that the actors should have facilities for quick changes of costume."

When Mr Kemendy constructed this white-washed wall, ingeniously pierced with invisible holes for starlight effect, he was, of course, aware that it was one of the many details of the new stage which will distress the orthodox. But, indifferent to the fact, he passed to other innovations. Accordingly, we next find him actively constructing the ground plan of the new stage, still pursuing the economies of space and time. His first question here is: "How can I arrange my stage? In two parts—front and back. The back stage immediately in front of the wall-screen can remain simply for big panoramic effects, or it can be utilised for 'crowd' effects. It can be constructed in three separate movable sections, to be raised or lowered to form rostrums, or to be worked to give natural appearances to large moving bodies, either approaching or receding. In this way I shall destroy the convention of ships like the *Flying Dutchman* passing out of a palsied backcloth full tilt at a startled audience, in the manner of the Boadicea group charging upon the House of Commons, and open up wide avenues down which they may make a natural entrance. On the existing stage a little ship goes a long way with the artistic spectator; on the new stage it will be different."

Having settled the back stage, Mr Kemendy arrived at

the front stage. Here he had to solve the general problem of quick changes. How to keep the scenes moving without the irritating pause of one big set succeeding another on the conventional stage—that was the question. He knew it had been attacked and answers provided as widely apart as the elimination of scenery by Savits and the Elizabethan Society, the introduction of immovable and adaptable setting as at the Kunstler Theatre, the adoption of movable stages—the revolving stage at the Coliseum, London, and the Deutsches Theatre, Berlin,—and the hydraulic-lift stage (one stage above another) invented in America and once promised to England by Sir Charles Wyndham.

But none of these solutions satisfied him. The no-scenery method was not logical ; the immovable setting was full of disadvantages—the proscenium frame, for instance, must always have a door. The revolving stage did not answer. When set for a big production the scenes were too small and too tight, besides being out of gear ; their entrances and exits especially were all wrong. The hydraulic lift stage had all the imperfections of the passenger lift, with none of its perfections. It was always in a fix. There was nothing, then, to do but to invent a new arrangement that would facilitate the rapid change of scenery and preserve the desired continuity and unity of scenes. Hence emerged a structure consisting of three parts, a centre and two side platforms moving on wheels. By this invention the logical growth of the production is maintained, for it enables one scene to be played while another scene is being struck and set expeditiously, and with no more trouble than would be necessary to set it in the ordinary way. More-

over, it removes the necessity for striking a scene that has to be repeated.

One innovation led to another. The triple fore-stage had hardly reached completion when it was seen that its use in big panoramic scenes would entirely dispense with side wings. On either side of the centre platform there would be a space that could be devoted to the expansion of the scene. Nothing must mask these spaces, for in the variety of moving light and shade effects upon great expanses of land and sea and sky would come the magical effects of nature itself. Thus from eliminating the unessentials at the sides the inventor arrives at the top opening of the stage; and in deciding to fill it solely with light, and to get all his lighting from this point, he reaches the most difficult problem of all. We can hear him putting the question: "How can I get great masses of light and shade distributed from above? How can I give the new setting life? What system of lighting shall I employ?" The diffusion of light had to be settled in a new way, and it was inevitable that the inventor would devise his own system of lighting, and erect it in a position that would enable him to obtain the greatest effect from the background which he had prepared, as well as from the immense spaces ready to be vitalised with light and colour. Some experiments have led him to suspend a number of galleries or bridges on one side of the stage. These are firmly secured to the roof by a grille, and arranged one above the other so as to be invisible to the nearest spectator. From these galleries it is possible to obtain the most varied moving effects from the latest mechanical inventions. Such effects will be reproduced on

the wall or screen and the space in front of it. Further, in order to flood the stage, or to focus and intensify particular passions, emotions, or aspects of the scene, as was done in *Sumurūn* at the Coliseum, he has fixed a number of triangular lamps underneath the ends of the bridges.

Such is a brief outline of the conception and construction of Mr Kemendy's new stage. The mechanism for controlling and working it is very simple and economical, and the stage-manager can obtain all the results he desires by merely moving a lever here or there, and this without having to hurl the slang dictionary at stupid stage-hands.

There is no need to dwell at length on its promising features. Speaking of its advantages, the inventor told me that it aids the quick and easy handling of scenes. It shortens the waits. It solves the problems of act-division and of the change of scenery in view of the audience. It dispenses with the use of the conventional proscenium arch. It gives a natural perspective to the scene, and increases the pictorial effect. It does away with the narrow entrances, and thereby facilitates the handling of big crowds. It allows three scenes to be set at once. It admits of the highest perfection of lighting effects. It reduces the danger of fire. It promotes economy in the use of scenery, and it gives the scene-shifter a holiday.

Anyone can see that such an invention offers the stage and its production much freer scope, and prepares the way for new triumphs of staging and dramatic *ensemble* on a vast scale. One can imagine the Rhinegold Cycle played on this stage in a far more convincing manner than at Bayreuth, and

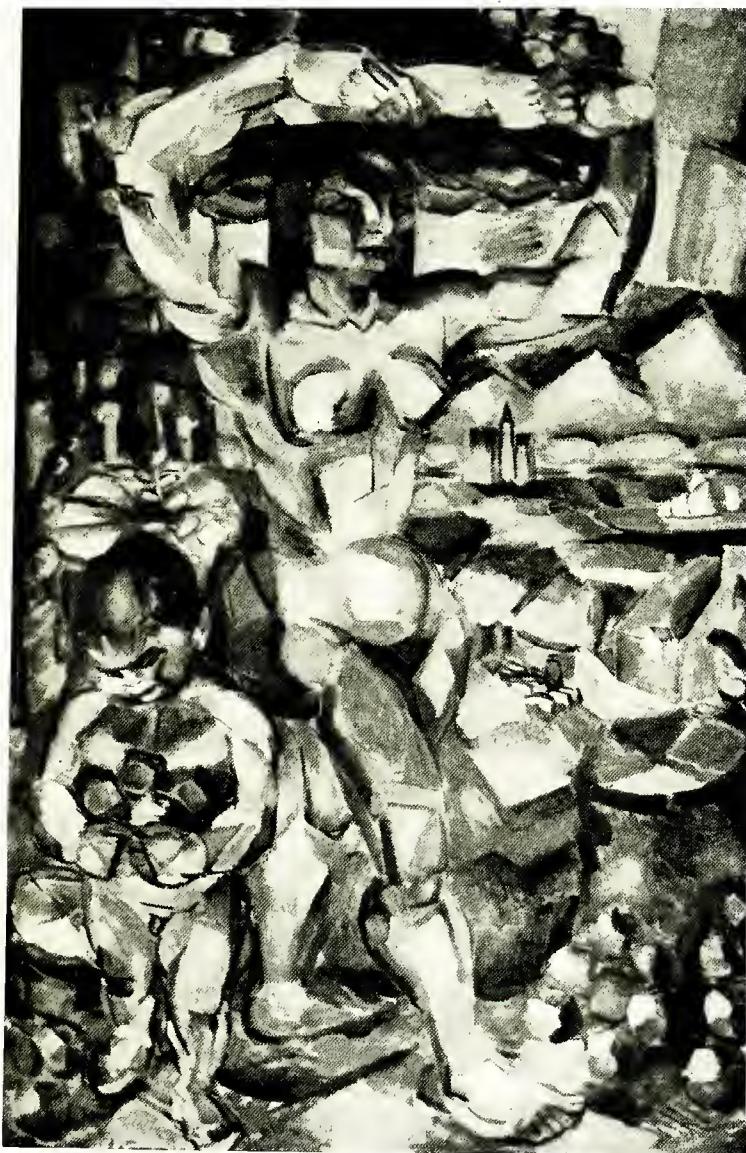
without that weird medley of pantomime animals which Wagner introduced. No woolly rams looking like animated door-mats, no Peter Pan dragons with Ansonia clocks inside, no mechanical birds warranted to fly five consecutive minutes without stopping, no bears with union forelegs and non-union back-legs (or black-legs for short). Nothing, in fact, to reduce the affair to the level of a box of wooden soldiers all made to stand up. Artistically, the new stage aids the distribution of masses, and emphasises the structure and rhythm of great dramas.

Beyond the invention of his stage, Mr Kemendy has been preoccupied with the search for the quick-change and simplified Shakespeare setting. It appears to be the fashion among Continental theatres to seek to rescue Shakespeare from the obliteration with which the all-scenery and no-scenery mania threatens him in England. The researchers are exhausting considerable energy in devising Shakespeare settings and Shakespeare stages. And the reason? Some are convinced there are more Shakespeare settings than one. Others maintain there is only one, and Shakespeare experimental theatres should be established to determine which it is. Perhaps it would be advisable, in view of this, for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Syndicate to sit quite still till the experiments are concluded, lest it be discovered that the vast imagination of Shakespeare demands the vast spaces of Hyde Park. Of course, the S.M.T.S. may point out that M. Eugene Ivanfi, a sociétaire of the National Theatre, Buda-Pesth, complains that playing in the open-air theatre is bad for the voice. It is difficult to make sound travel in big

unconfined spaces. But then the open-air theatre might retort that nowadays few actors have voices to send on tour. Unfortunately, the example of the eminent Greek elocutionist is no longer followed. Persons on the stage do not make a practice of filling their mouths with stones and shouting for hours on the sad sea-shore.

The Neo-Shakespearean activity in Buda-Pesth is another sign that the development of Shakespeare as a showman is rapidly being succeeded by the newer tendency to develop him as a technician. It is now generally believed that as a stage-craftsman Shakespeare was not only ahead of his own, but of our times. I have already shown how Shakespeare travelled to the Continent with his idea of simplicity, which in the course of time Germany discovered and is now applying. Germany has also discovered the Shakespearean time-saving device of alternate stages, employed at a period when the revolving stage was unknown in England.

In this way, then, the big theatres, of Europe are searching with an open conscience for the perfect Shakespearean stage and setting. And at the *Shauspielhaus*, Berlin, at the *Burg Theatre*, Vienna, at the *National Theatre*, Buda-Pesth, where Shakespeare is perfectly interpreted, some interesting experiments have been the result. The Royal Opera House at Munich has adopted one type of "New Shakespeare Stage," namely, that which consists of fitting a deep immovable frame to the front part of the stage, leaving a cramped space at the back, which necessitates the reduction of the walls, furniture, etc., to the simplest elements. Wagner is also represented at this theatre under the same conditions of



ABUNDANCE.
BY LE FAUCONNIER.

setting. One type of simplified Shakespearean stage consists of three parts—front, middle, back,—divided by two curtains. The front stage unites with the first curtain to form exteriors. The middle stage unites with the second curtain to form interiors. The back stage, when both curtains are raised, forms the background or perspective. This stage serves for all the Shakespearean plays.

In pursuit of his own object, Mr Kemendy has adapted the main idea of the stage of the Old Swan Theatre. This play-house, like the Globe and Fortune, was built on a simple plan. The stage was merely a platform extending as an apron to the centre of the pit. The spectators were seated almost round it, except at the narrow point, where it was joined to the tiring-house. The stage had no proscenium arch, no flies or wings. Mr Kemendy has constructed a simple framework, consisting of an upper and lower part. Each part has three openings—a centre and two side ones. This frame of six frames remains throughout the play, and the scenes are played in the various openings, upstairs or downstairs, or on both levels at once, as the case may be. If *Hamlet* is being played, the centre opening top answers for the terrace where the Ghost appears; and if the latter does not object, he may exhaust his native fire and strength by tracking Hamlet all round the upper and lower compartments. For him the transition from the lower to the upper house is natural and rapid. The Gravedigger has a nice little vault all to himself in the opening down right, where he is discovered by Hamlet, Horatio and Co., after they have made their entrance up back to the left of the setting, and enjoyed a fairly long walk

amid the beauties of the imagination. The lighting is simple and effective. That part of the setting in use is illuminated. The rest is blacked out. The balcony scene of *Romeo and Juliet* is played in the usual way, but the meeting of lovers is more expeditiously arranged. It is but a step from below to Juliet's chamber, just as it is but a step from the Balcony Scene to the Divorce Court. The conclusion reached is that Shakespeare on the Continent is not the Shakespeare off it. On the Continent he is accorded a position; in England he is accorded adjectives. Buda-Pesth honours him as a great creative artist. Shakespeare societies have been formed in his honour. Distinguished Hungarian poets—Arany, Petofi, Vorosmarty, Rakosi—vie with each other in translating him. The National Theatre gives him the finest interpretation. In England his name is used for begging purposes.

XI

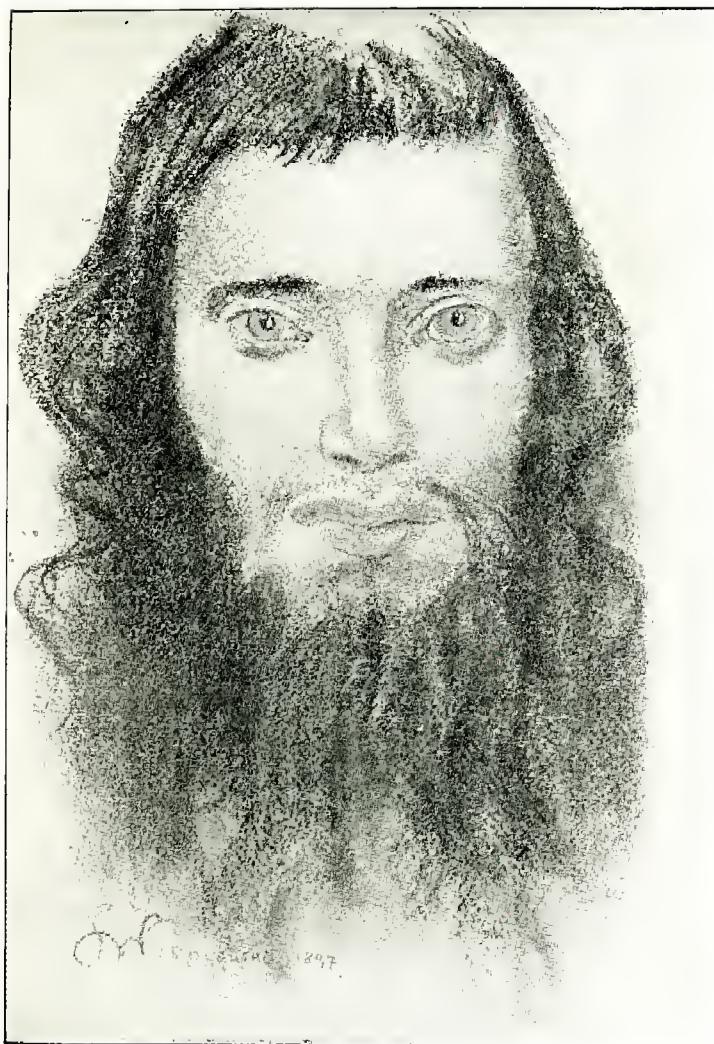
THE NEW SPIRIT IN CRACOW

Cracow an art city—Its patriotic in literature, art, and drama—The Theatre Wyspianski.

THE dominant note in Cracow is patriotic. In fact, Cracow lives its life in individual and collective patriotism. It is the true patriotism—that which resents the degradation of national character and the glorification of mean and despicable types. Everything is done to preserve the best features of the race and the old city. Perhaps it is wrong to speak of Cracow as old. It has never ceased to be young. In spite of the new generation of conquerors that have come knocking at its door, it has retained its early forms. The wonderful dignity of line against the sky, the built harmonies, the extraordinary relation of shapes, the simple beauties of mass—these persist; they are the elements of eternal architecture. Few cities have such right to be called artistic. Few are so full of painters' and draughtsmen's "bits." Few possess architecture with so much background, reason, and drawing. It is unnecessary to particularise. The big relation and direction of line in one street, Ulica Mikolajska, describe those of others, Ulica Sienna, Ulica Golebia, Ulica Bracka, etc. One exquisite courtyard, the Gymnazyum Nowodwors-

kie, discloses the dignity and charm of others, Collegium Juridicum, etc. The circling towers of the fascinating Barbakan carry the eye to a realm of corresponding towers. The delightful curves of old doorways nod to each other across fertile spaces. One picturesque quarter, having a strong personality, raises the curtain on others.

Come to the Jewish quarter, the Kazmierz. It is Friday. The old houses are pressing softly in upon a dense stream of languorous human lava. So much alike are the units of this stream, it is difficult to individualise them. But one knows they are the despised race: refugees, picturesquely decked out in beaver hats, side curls, and long trailing coats. The hall-mark of barter is upon them, and they are meek and long-suffering. So one may penetrate, unmolested, down Plutonian passages into dark, low rooms, where members of the Chosen Race are grouped in smoke and mystery. Here, while we drink with them the honeyed miod, we may gather such impressions of dramatic light and shade as Rembrandt sought and found. Or we may plunge boldly, still unmolested, into Jewish meeting-houses to scorch in the slow fire of the intense devotional atmosphere, and to marvel at the gathering of unforgettable Jewish types seen in a blaze of candle-light and bending over musty tomes, in feature and dress repeating so markedly the devotional line, colour, mood of the architecture and decorations. Or come to the Market Place. It is Sunday. The simple lines of the architecture are swinging rhythmically round a great coloured crowd of Polish peasants. Upon the neutral walls frescoes of living forms are leaping; upon this background the harmonious colours seek and find



STUDY OF HIMSELF
BY WYSPIANSKI.

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each other in passionate embrace. It is so easy for them to do so. It is inevitable. The Poles, especially the peasants, feel colour. They seem unable to miss it. From the delicate tones of the scarves on the women's heads to the harmonising tones of their stockings and lower wear, all is right. With them it is, colour's in the blood and all's right with the world, as Browning would say. We may watch the colours merry-making on the walls for hours and there will not be a blot, only decoration. A society has been formed for the preservation of old Cracow and to put frames on its endless pictures. A great deal of valuable work has been done by individual members of this society. Dr Francis Klein, for example, has published two comprehensive volumes that bring the historical, topographical, and artistic features of the place vividly before us. It is really worth forming societies for such artistic ends, even though there were not in Cracow an unusual feeling and understanding for the beauty and simple forms of old architecture, combined with a love of patriotism, to make it absolutely necessary.

The dominant note of patriotism is found, too, in literature and art. It is embodied in Dr J. M. Retinger's *Miesiecznik*, a progressive art and literary periodical publication having all the feverishness of fruitful purpose upon it. This admirably illustrated journal finds contributors among the Young Poland group, and furnishes a clue to advanced thought in Poland. The note is found, too, in the works of the old generation of painters, Grottger, Matejko, and others, and informs that of the new and advanced spirits, poets, and painters, Wyspianski, Sichulski, Gierymski, Podkowinski, Chelmonski, Weiss, Wyc-

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kill the monopoly. It has given birth to one of the most astonishing artistic geniuses that Poland has ever seen, who, possessing extraordinary gifts for church decoration, has declared himself in favour of the theatre. Stanislaw Wyspianski provides the new type of artist whose dreams are of the theatre, whose work is eloquent with a prophecy of the coming dawn, and who is, indeed, destined to transfer the secret of the æsthetic development of the church to the theatre.

Wyspianski was colossal—a sort of modern da Vinci. He was a poet, painter, town-planner, he was a dramatist, artist of the theatre, and visionary. In fact, he did everything in his short life. He died at thirty-five, after an heroic life of devotion to his great ideals, of struggle, illness, and poverty, his later years greatly embittered by an unhappy marriage to a peasant girl. It is really wonderful how Wyspianski stamped himself upon his city and generation. Turn in any direction, and there is Wyspianski, his heroic life and aims, recorded in poetical rhapsodies, his soul perpetuated in beautiful forms of expression. He has written the modern story of the deliverance of the artistic soul, with his artistic qualities of originality, intensity, movement, rhythm, fine draughtsmanship, a true sense of colour, harmony, and decoration. He has woven these elements into many and varied forms. He has adorned church interiors with polychromics, decorated their walls with fields of alluring lilies, he has mosaiced their dignified aisles with gorgeously composed stained windows. He has designed daring public and domestic interiors, set their marvellous monochromic walls ablaze with the harmonising colours flung from symbolic

windows, and invented for them appropriate ornamentation and furniture. Then he has contracted the fever of the civic renaissance, and, answering to the call of the artistic instinct urging him to transform the things of life into things of monumental and decorative beauty, has left Cracow staggering under masterly plans for an acropolis. He saw the church and castle-crowned hill, the royal burg that lifts itself above Cracow, set with a diadem of architectural greatness. So he produced his architectural plan of reconstruction before which Cracow stands amazed. Beyond this, he has contributed materially towards the modern movement in painting, and he has richly endowed the National Gallery. His versatility, however, meant little. His heart was really in the theatre. He wrote prose and poetical plays, he invented the settings and costumes for them, he painted the scenery, and he superintended their production. Though, in his early search for the fullest means of expression he wavered between the Church and the theatre, he finally concluded that the latter offered the newest and freest scope for the exercise of the artistic imagination and the most favourable ground for his own evolution. It is surely a good sign when richly endowed artists like Wyspianski woo the theatre.

So Wyspianski aimed to be the ideal author and producer. And not without reason. He was well equipped for his ambitious task. He was a man of ideal vision and creation, his artistic outlook was wide, and the old passionate Polish blood was seething in his veins, warmed by the noble fire of national ideals. He saw the soul, social and revolutionary,

of his country, and sought to reveal it in symbolic drama. But his method of interpretation lacked insight. Instead of creating a new dramatic action to which advanced artistic ideas might be wed, he helped himself to the old stuff.

Wyspianski was largely influenced by the Greeks and Shakespeare. He wrote a study of Hamlet, which contains his ideas concerning the theatre and drama, and which reveals his dramatic intention, namely, that of putting Poland on the stage as Hamlet, much as Shakespeare dramatised mankind in the contemplative form of Hamlet. The idea of dramatising the national conscience or soul is not new. It is very common with patriots. But the interpretation may be new. Wyspianski, however, appeared to favour the old machinery. In this connection he helped himself pretty freely to Greek and Shakespearean traditions. Thus his plays are a mixture of the classical and modern. An interesting mixture, but not exactly that of which the new romance is being born.

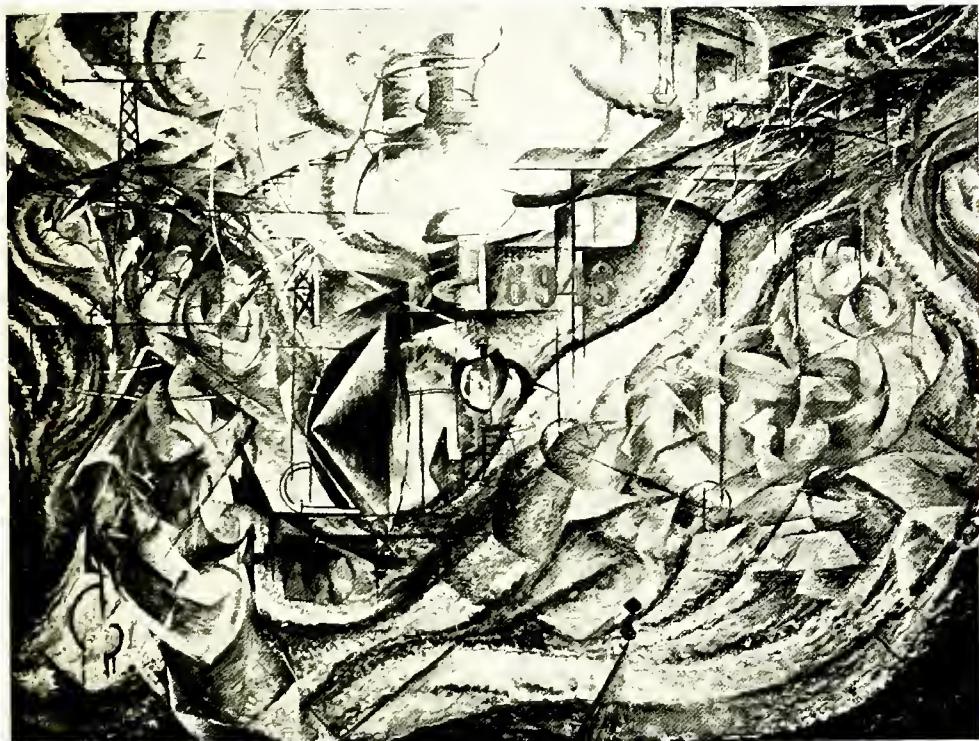
The taste for old forms bred in Wyspianski an inordinate love of spirits. He is always calling them up in order to stimulate the action. In *Wesele* (The Wedding), for instance, he adopts Shakespearean methods of materialising psychological states. A woman who has lost her lover attends a peasant wedding. And in one scene—remarkable for representation of peasant character—the “wraiths” of her memories appear one by one during the course of the evening.

Wyspianski has in some instances neglected the new principle of rhythm and mood. It is not clear whether he had a notion of the modern conception of the association of ideas on the stage. In any case, he did not apply it to the

productions which I saw at the State and Art Theatre of Cracow. I refer to the principle which claims that every good play has a fundamental rhythm. This rhythm or note must be discovered and developed to give the widest expression to the mood of the play which the author has created. Any intelligent person can imagine this fundamental rhythm—in line and colour,—when once found, being developed from scene to scene, till everything in the play—words, gestures, setting, costumes, accessories—is intoxicated with it. But the fundamental note must be true, otherwise the whole structure will be false. If the note is false, the treatment will reveal it. If the root of the tree is affected, the tree itself and its fruit will be affected. In plays treated under the old methods of production this fundamental note is not considered. Each scene is treated separately, and unity and continuity of setting or background is not sought after. In other words, there is, as a rule, nothing in the setting to develop and carry on the main action. The introduction of the Wagnerian motive and progression into the scenery is quite new. The Russian Ballets were the first to bring it to England.

The fault of Wyspianski in *Noc Listopadowa* (*November Night*)—the second production that I saw at the excellent State Theatre) is that he seizes the dominant rhythm—revolution,—but does not develop his picture accordingly. The play is concerned with the first Polish revolution of eighty years ago. It embraces the story of a Polish woman who married a Russian Prince in order to conciliate him to Polish aims. She is supposed to be swayed between the conflicting emotions of love of country and love of husband.

Not much of this side is, however, shown. Wyspianski aims rather to represent the course of the revolutionary crisis. The events of this are compressed within a single night, and they advance as swiftly and uninterruptedly as the rather clumsy action will admit, to the inevitable climax—the failure of the outbreak. Apart from its archaic construction, the play has a great deal that is beautiful and impressive. It does reflect the depth and intensity of the revolutionary spirit. It has the right atmosphere of suspense. There is always a feeling of something in the air, something about to happen. It stirs the imagination, grips the attention in parts, and the big scenes move silently to the expected end. There is also a process of enlightenment in which Fate takes a significant part. And the whole is coloured by suggestion. But the points that produce such a profound impression upon the mind are largely interfered with by the apparitions of the Grecian ideals of play-craft. That these devices can be taken seriously says much for the strength and sincerity of the author. The modern spectator is not accustomed to the introduction into modern serious plays of the Greek chorus and heroic sentiment clothed in positive mythological forms; and the introduction of symbols of the kind into modern drawing-rooms is apt to be the cue rather for laughter than for admiration. Even Helen and Paris as symbols of the highest physical embodiment of beauty would not be tolerated seriously, so accustomed are we to regard Niobe's tears as a matter for laughter. It would come, then, as a shock to most people to discover Pallas, supported by angels—the Winged Victories—making a stately entrance for the purpose of exhorting



LES ADIEUX
BY UMBERTO BOCCIONI.

nineteenth-century revolutionaries to supreme effort. Few among modern theatre-goers have the knowledge or imagination necessary to interpret this peculiar method of symbolising and invoking the heroic or patriotic spirit. Likewise it would be difficult for the London-trained mind to understand the introduction of devils expressing malign influences in the *Faust* entre-act played in a scene representing the stage of the old Variety Theatre at Warsaw. Then the sculptured group of King John also at Warsaw would require historical reference. It is not generally known that the heroic deeds of this king in conflict with the Turks were such as to inspire corresponding deeds. So to most people there would be a continual referring back to historical and other documents for the origins of these heroic conceptions in Greek mythology and modern history, and a consequent confusion of mind through not knowing off-hand who the deuce Pallas and other personages of the Imperial Grecian Court were, and what part they are supposed to take in inspiring modern ideals. Nowadays people are so ignorant of ancient history that it is a dangerous experiment to clothe classical abstract ideas in positive forms. Owing to this defect, it is not unusual to find authors mixed up with their creations losing their identity, and being mistaken for Gothic devils.

Coming to Wyspianski's artistic omissions—his neglect to develop the fundamental rhythm in his settings—one or two of the great possibilities he missed may be suggested. In the first scene of *November Night* we are launched to the brink of a revolution. In spite of the conventional setting, we are conscious of an infinite space in which things, though

they appear motionless, are revolving fiercely and rapidly. They advance, touch each other, recede, advance, and so on for ever. But only part of this congested movement is symbolised by the words and by the classic element. The rest is shut out by commonplace machinery, a background of weapons, piled-up cannon-balls, and other implements of war against which the military figures move. Rightly, all the lines of the scene should be composed to represent the seething and involved movement, like a scourged flood-tide beating in upon itself. Bound within the narrowed-down space should be shapes and images of all the ideas expressed, working in softly, swiftly, insistently upon one another. The lines and colours of the setting, costumes, and accessories should be composed to express a chaos of pent-up emotions, contrasts, movements held in by iron necessity ; nothing, in fact, getting away, but everything ready to burst forth like crashing thunderbolts at the desired moment. This fundamental rhythm would be traced working and expanding through the succeeding scene till it reaches the point of explosion. In the third act would come the tearing of the iron circle to pieces by suggestion of the lines and colours striking and scorching in lanes of fire in all directions. Here it would be further caught up and developed in a new motive—the failure motive. Conflicting lines and colours would be introduced to indicate the element of Fate surrounding the revolutionaries, and to carry the action forward towards the *dénouement*. So throughout the drama the rhythm-motives would be developed. The fault of the production is that though there is a supernatural feeling there is nothing super-

natural in the pictures. Unity and continuity is suggested, but only by the words.

Wyspianski's line in *November Night* is mainly horizontal. Its direction is upward, towards classical dignity and exaltation. It carries one from height to height, mostly marble ones, and it misses the direction which the line of the fundamental rhythm should take. Of course, the essential line should also exalt, but it need not give one a cold fit of classical vapours. It should rather make us drunk with movement. In drama the flower of rhythm is ecstasy.

Wyspianski's contribution to the modern movement in drama and in the theatre may be said to be largely on the philosophical-artistic side. He dreamt of the salvation of the theatre and of its artistic deliverance from present inartistic conventions. He had a vision of a theatre exalted to the level of the Church. His theatre was to be a form of confessional for the national conscience, wherein the soul of the people might seek truth and see itself illuminated by truth. Thus the theatre of Wyspianski was to be dedicated to the great mysteries of national life, uniting heaven and earth, the spiritual and temporal. As a dramatist he united the ideals of the Greeks, the Middle Ages, and the moderns. As an artist he sought to weld the theatrical and artistic forms, searching unceasingly by original scenic experiments to attain his end. As a patriot he dreamt and wrote of Poland delivered.

XII

THE NEW SPIRIT IN WARSAW

The curse of persecution—The cure of open-air æsthetics—Its application in Warsaw.

SPRINKLED on the main Cracow to Warsaw line are summer colonies to which self-exiled city dwellers fly for release from the overpowering sense of Russian oppression. There is very little to choose between these places. One may appear rather patronising, another supercilious, another reverential, another deferential, another familiar, and so on. It all depends upon how you take them, or rather how they take you—for a very humble or a highly superior person, as the case may be. Milanowek took me very well. It was cordial in the extreme. As a matter of fact, it sent to Warsaw for me and waited impatiently for the train to cover the intervening hour's distance and deliver me safely into its embracing arms. Then, the elementary signs of the language of greeting exchanged, it bid me look round and note what its attractions were. These introduced themselves as: a swarm of naked pine-bungalows, sprawling full length in the scintillating summer sun. They press restlessly into the caressing yellow sand, and are beguiled to sleep by the swaying tapestry of pines that mark a frontierless plain and a festival of moving skies. I observed that the

plain formed a palette upon which vast skies place an inconceivable range of colours. The colours are mainly used to produce great sunset effects as preludes to silent and subtle nights.

Milanowek knows how to stage-manage its extraordinary natural effects. I remember sitting on the verandah of the cosy bungalow of Mr Holewinski, one of the organisers of the Allied Artists' Association. The conversation rolled round a variety of subjects, ranging from art to economics. The law of association was active. The sight of a sheepskin coat from Zakopane led me to a discussion of Polish peasant industries, and the high percentage of artistic achievement in spite of wretched poverty and uneducation. The conclusion was that art, like poverty, the poor have always with them. Upon the sheepskin coat we were wafted to Warsaw Art Gallery. But a peculiar mood possessed us, and we could not concentrate upon certain works, like the painter who is unable to see a square subject when he is in a round mood. The mad rush of warriors in Jan Matejko's enormous canvas, the patriotism of Jozef Brandt, and Wyspianski's colour portrait, fell flat ; while Kedzierski's fine subtlety of colour, Wyczolkowski's tremendous decorative and very daring portrait, and the delicate line, sense of design, and rich colour harmonies of the Polish Beardsley, Woytkiewicz, failed to produce mental apoplexy. The mood was indeed determined by the moving background. With the sun slipping behind the network of pines in a sea of blood, and the night advancing on wings tinged with fire, it was impossible to think deeply on any subjects save those which

Polish pleinairistes affect. The dark pine forests gashed with the reds and blues of day and night; the snow-capped mountains leaping in crystal air, and terraced lakes swooning beneath the wealth of sun and stars. These subjects and another of far greater import, which Jozef Chelmonski has made his own. As we sat talking, his peasant types came carving themselves out of the blood-red mist that flamed across the illimitable space. There was no mistaking the type or its tragic significance. There was a hint of terrible suppression to the point of self-annihilation in every line. The sullen droop of the body as though drawn to the earth by invisible forces, the lowering look, the ugly shoot of the lower lip, the downward trend of the lower curves, as of a rhythm drawn to attenuation beneath the surface, had the from-earth-to-earth direction of human clay upon which Nature had wantonly squandered life. It was not surprising that our thoughts were held by this type, for the peasant is the root from which the whole rhythm of Russian persecution may be developed. In other words, the evil effect of the Russian occupation of Poland starts with the land.

Let me digress. A journey across Europe in one of those geographical dredgers, a Continental express, has one important lesson. It teaches that the condition of a country announces the condition of its people. So if Holland appeared prosperous, its people are no less comfortably housed and fed. Germany is still more flourishing. Its broad lands are fertile and well cultivated, and the physical conditions of all classes answer to that of the land. Town planning, city development, garden suburbising are working nobly hand-in-

hand to eliminate both the rent- and beer-collecting classes. Austria is seen to be largely guided by Germany, and is contributing seriously to the health of communities. With the Polish frontier comes a change in the condition of the land and the people. Both, however, are not so bad as to be unpicturesque. They are in that fainting condition when the air is filled with perfume and vinegar, and it needs but the application of a burnt feather to set things right. It is when the Russian frontier is crossed that the descent into hell really commences, and the smell of sulphur—or is it naphtha?—keeps the nose wrinkled and the upper lip curled. The wild, neglected, persecuted character of the country bites into the vitals, whether one views it from the railway carriage or from a balcony overlooking the Vistula in picturesque old Warsaw. There is very little effort to reclaim or cultivate it. The rightful owner, the Polish peasant, is rapidly being carried off to recruit the Russian army, while the Russian peasant is being put upon the land, of whose requirements he knows nothing. These peasants are destitute, half-naked, and many of them live in sand huts. The air of ugly neglect rolls to the city like a stream of pitch along the corpse-like roads. The roads stretch and fasten tentacle-like upon the heart of the city withering beneath despotism. The heart is drained of the life-blood of new movements. Such movements the Russian Government regard as anti-government. The formation of societies for the development of protection of the city and its people is forbidden. Municipal proposals are forced to journey to the Central Government at St Petersburg, where they idle five years to be rejected. The lines of communica-

tion, such as the Vistula, are kept closed. The nationalisation of railways reaches its lowest point of imbecility. There is no public assistance for the poor. The Russians refuse to do anything for cultural movements. There are but few schools. The educational system is Russian. The moral and physical conditions of life amongst the Poles have changed for the worse since the beginning of the Russian occupation. The social and economic conditions are a scandal. Many of the houses are big barracks in which one hundred families or more live. So dear is the land, it does not pay to build houses to accommodate less. Besides this, the city is overrun with Jews, who call themselves Russians and live behind steel shutters ; it is infested with the prisoners set free by the Russian revolution, as well as by savages in uniform to whom the slightest hint is the signal for wholesale bloodshed. The police are hopelessly corrupt, and sedition is scented in a look. Daily convoys of convicts drift Siberiawards. Every form of irritation is adopted. Nearly all public monuments have been banned, save those erected by the Russian Government to the memory of Polish traitors. Old historical buildings, sanctified by the blood of Polish heroes, sweat with Government officials and common soldiers. Empty Greek churches grin down upon an exasperated public. The censorship erects gibbets at every literary and art corner. Pictures, books, and dramas are exiled by the score. Its exuberant energy is shown in the story of a painter who produced an admirable canvas containing a black raven sitting on a fence. The picture was suppressed because the black raven recalled the white eagle of Poland. From this one gathers it is sometimes dangerous to



A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE WARSAW OPEN-AIR THEATRE.



WYSPIANSKI'S SKETCH OF THE WARSAW OPEN-AIR THEATRE.

It forms one of the scenes in "November Night." It is remarkable for passion, feeling, movement.

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express even the most harmless things. An open mouse-trap might, for instance, be taken as the symbol of the escape of Poland from the Russian prison, and would doubtless suggest to the censor that prison is the best place for the daring artist, unless he be the possessor of a long pair of legs.

In this way the censorship banishes revolutionary works to Cracow ; and Cracow, rising to the occasion, does its best to let Warsaw have the benefit of the privilege. Once a year it has a short season of military plays, to which the Warsawians, returning from their holidays and in search of a thrill, are invited. Thus they may witness thrillers like that dealing with the death of the Emperor Paul, and be made happy by the spectacle of a Russian despot being smothered by his dutiful son. They are also enabled to revisit Warsaw scenery with which they are more or less familiar, and to note how interesting it becomes when served up in artistic fashion as a stage setting. Whether they appreciate the emancipation of the scenery I am unable to say. As I sat in the State Theatre and watched Wyspianski's idealisation of the open-air theatre at Warsaw unfold in *November Night*, I wondered how many who were unfamiliar with the artistic treatment of this scene would be decided that they had ever seen the real thing. The theatre is situated in a park at Warsaw. It is formed by classical ruins on an island in a lake. Facing the theatre are terraced seats surmounted by sculptured Greeks. Between the seats and the stage is a band of blue water, providing luxurious stalls for swans, who have heard of the Swan of Avon, and are anxious to develop the creative power of the brain under his guidance. Wyspianski

has introduced the scene into the latter part of his play for a gathering of the conspirators after the plot has failed. It is one of the most successful scenes ; and the quiet movements of the lines, shapes, and colours do suggest the dying down of the revolution. But this aspect was not so marked in the stage setting as in the sketch for it, which is, I believe, published with the play, and which is far more convincing than in the play itself. As a rule, it is the reverse. The setting is of more importance than the sketch, seeing that the stage gives the latter fulness and body. This fact was very noticeable in the exhibition of the designs for the settings and costumes of the Théâtre des Arts, included in the Autumn Salon. It is not so, however, with Wyspianski's sketches, so far as I have seen. He imports a great deal of passion, feeling, and movement into them—it may be seen in a sketch for *Legenda*, wherein every touch unites so admirably to express the passing of a storm—which is lacking in the stage sets. Perhaps he was badly served as a producer. Moreover, it is not clear whether he understood unity and continuity, not in individual scenes but as applied to a complete play. That is, whether he saw the logical development of the dominant note of a drama throughout every scene and act, or, like so many decorators, merely saw it in emotional fragments. There is all the difference in the world in seeing the decorations for a play as a whole and seeing them in detached masses. The latter is the old way ; the former the new, which is to revolutionise the art of the theatre. It is certain, however, that Wyspianski saw the utility of side curtains used in place of side wings, and from this one

may assume he sought a device for carrying on the action in space.

The wisdom of Cracow in providing stimulating revolutionary fare for Warsaw wanderers is manifest. But for this the latter city would be in grave danger of being reduced by the censorship, especially in dramatic matters, to imbecility.

Another means of warding off the fearful depression set up by Russian persecution would be the development of its rather crudely worked open-air theatre on the lines now being laid down throughout Europe. The revival of the open-air or nature theatre is a part of the theatrical renaissance. It may be the outcome of the increasing desire for lyrical expression. In any case, it is a manifestation of the search for artistic expression and the desire to cultivate the open-air habit. Beyond this, it is bound up with economic and hygienic questions. The striking thing is the remarkable growth of this class of theatre. During the last few years it has sprung into existence with amazing rapidity. Every summer witnesses the opening of new nature temples. Each suitable centre in turn establishes a nature sanctuary. Thus, during the last fifteen years France, Germany, Austria, Bavaria, and other countries have worshipped the classical, religious, and occasionally the contemporary drama, seated on slopes or circling stones, amid forest, greensward, plain—wherever nature offered a background of poetry. Thus nature has been found adapted more or less to the requirements of the new dramatic attitude, and has freely offered space for many and varied forms of theatre. The nature theatre of Ober-Ammergau, Bayonné, Biarritz, Dinard ; the

Roman theatre of Orange, of Athéna-Nike at Marseilles ; the people's theatre at Bussang, Bernau, and on the Neckar ; the pine-wood theatres in Saxony ; the festival theatres near Potsdam, Berlin, and at Bernau ; and theatres, verdure scenes, and wood scenes elsewhere, at Aix-en-Province, Arcachon, Cauterets, Aulnay-sous-Bois, Champigny-la-Bataille, Hertenstein, and scores more. A recent notable addition to these theatres is that in the woods of Klampenborg, near Copenhagen. Here an open-air theatre has been constructed consisting of a large stage with dressing-rooms beneath it, and accommodating four thousand persons.

The modern open-air theatre originated in the demands for more natural, æsthetic, and hygienic conditions of dramatic representation. Whether it meets all these demands is extremely doubtful. It is a Greek convention, is largely based on Greek traditions, and recalls a dramatic period when plays were written to be produced in the open air before thousands of spectators. At that time many things favoured such productions. There were blue skies overhead, widespread, richly tinted environments, and an intoxicating air-bath for the spectators. The scenic arrangements were a palace or temple front. Besides this, devices were employed to help the actors and the acting. The actors were built-up and made to appear gigantic even in those vast spaces, and were, moreover, enabled to attain the essential proportions and expression by the help of masks, draperies, and megaphones. The acoustic properties were extraordinarily fine. To-day, however, the open-air actor depends for his finest effects on his own unaided equipment. How, then, can he



CAFÉ SCENE
BY GINO SEVERINI.

produce the desired expression? Apparently it is very difficult to do so. A prominent member of the *Comédie Française* recently complained that the natural background is disastrous both to the appearance and the voice. It is difficult not only to be seen but to be heard. But these are not insurmountable difficulties. If Greek plays are to be performed, they ought to be performed under the original conditions. But this is impossible. The rhythm of the verse, the rhythmic pose, and subconscious music seem to have gone for ever.

Another obstacle to the success of the open-air theatre may be found in the weather problem. There is, for instance, the adverse conditions under which the year before last the performance of the Ober-Ammergau Passion Play took place. There had been a fall of snow the night previous, and the stage had to be cleared before a start could be made. A solution to the rain problem was found in one place by an arrangement by which, in case the weather is unpropitious, the decision to have no performance would be telephoned and placarded on taxi-cabs.

Then there arises the question whether art can be better created in natural surroundings than in the theatre. It is a question whether art is based upon naturalism or realism, or upon suggestion. If the latter, then obviously the roofed-in theatre is better for the creation of art. Certainly the open-air theatre has serious artistic disadvantages. The actors are usually out of all proportion to the scenery. In some cases they appear like specks moving against great masses of rock and tree. Then the scenery is accidental. It does not belong

to, or grow out of, the action of the play, and it fails to give it essential wideness of expression. To be true, the lines and colours of the scenery should express the rhythm and psychology of the acting. Of course, these artistic defects might be partly overcome by writing plays round selected scenery, or set in an environment which has grown out of the actors, such as the village environment in which village festival plays are represented by the peasants in some parts of Germany. But the wonderful subtleties of speech and action, of colour and line, can never be fully expressed. In the nature theatre they must be sacrificed.

XIII

THE NEW SPIRIT IN MOSCOW

The artistic spirit in Moscow—The new schools of musicians, decorators, and dancers—The Moscow Art Theatre—Its origin, development, and present organisation—Its work and influence.

THE keynote of artistic expression in Russia to-day is rhythm. Rhythm is fascinating everyone. It is exercising a spell alike on dramatists, painters, dancers, and musicians. It is, in particular, the fundamental note of the compositions of the great school of national music that began with Glinka—who rediscovered the rhythm of the Russian folk-song,—and has gone on developing in one direction through Dargomishky, Balakirev, Mussorgsky, Borodini, Rimsky-Karsakoff, Glazounov, and in another through Tschaikovsky. And the idea of rhythm will doubtless continue to inspire artists in Russia, and affords a clue to the further development of all forms of art.

There is a great deal that is paradoxical in the development of art in Russia. Why, it may be asked, do the artistic outpourings of Moscow betray such a tendency towards repletion? Why has it one of the finest schools of dancing? Why, together with St Petersburg, is it producing a great school of theatre decorators? Its representative art gallery

introduces us to the work of giants ; and by Vastnetzoff, Wroubel, Roehrich, Bakst, Benois, Bogaevsky, Korovine, Bilibine, we find the "scene" has been rewritten up, and a prophetic volume published, so to speak, for the guidance of newcomers. It was only the other day that the Russian Ballets reminded us how far some of these decorators, working in harmony with composers and dancers, had gone beyond one or two dazzling reformers who would invest the stage with eternal glory, but seem to have lost the power to get something done. Why, too, has Moscow perhaps the best organised and equipped experimental theatre in the world ?

Why, indeed, is Moscow so sterile in other directions, yet so fertile in art ? Moscow presents a picture of the stationary and ecstatic. It is a religious fanatic in an electro-gilt temple, bowing to invisible gods. At first sight, neither the position nor the condition would appear to be favourable to art. But they are more favourable than they appear. Art is a jealous god. It tolerates no other gods. It demands to be crowned with ecstasy. And to put the crown of ecstasy upon its creations it demands furthermore the assistance of love. The wings of love are restless and agile. They are impatient, and keyed up to a high pitch of excitement which increases rather than decreases, till long after ecstasy has been attained. And ecstasy ? Well—ecstasy floats in the purple sea of the imagination and nowhere else. Here it is born, kisses the sun, and swoons away. If we accept this implication that ecstasy proceeding from love is the real foster-parent of art, we gain a key to the artistic attitude of Moscow.



DESIGN BY M. ROERICH
FOR THE RUSSIAN
OPERA-BALLET "PRINCE."

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Saint Moscow is deliriously ecstatic. It is idolatrous. It is always at a high pitch of excitement, always under the influence of its primitive instincts. Look at its big decorators, and note how their work recalls the primitive man with his immense openness and his childlike vital vision, to whom the Milky Way is the footsteps of angels. The fact is, Moscow has never grown up. It is in that condition of ecstasy, bordering on frenzy, which marked the Middle Ages. At that time men's thoughts were directed mainly to religion and art as a means of exhausting their energy and preserving their balance. They turned to the dramatised Church ritual and mystery plays for enlightenment and relief just as readily as men to-day turn to the social drama. Thus it would seem as though Moscow, being prevented from developing in one direction, the social, has been forced, in order to retain its sanity, to develop in another, the artistic. "Above Moscow only the Kremlin, above the Kremlin only the heavens," is a Russian saying. The Kremlin is the symbol of Moscow. Born within its red shadow, there Moscow has been reared and educated. It is, in fact, Kremlin-born, Kremlin-trained ; it thinks and acts in terms of the Kremlin, and has extended its personality outward from and in the form of the Kremlin. This Russian temple, wherein the souls of bygone Czars are enshrined amid eternal mysteries, perfumed splendours, and the mist of lights, where the mystical drama of the liturgy moves greatly amid golden walls veiled with the magnetic forms of angels and saints, is an embodiment of the Will of Heaven, brought to earth to dominate the Will of the Russian People. The Kremlin has

Moscow under its spell. It always has had; perhaps it always will have. Napoleon's visit made no difference. He came, blundered, and went, leaving for souvenir a cosmopolitan community of cannon numbering hundreds, to be strung round Moscow's holy of holies, like scalps at the waists of weltering warriors. Moscow has yielded to its Kremlin impulses, it has retained its Kremlin nature, it seems always in a haze of incense, always on its knees, whether in its twelve hundred or more dim shadowy churches and chapels, or at street-corners, before pictures of saints, always rapturously kissing the icon of our Lady of Vladimir and other holy icons, always worshipping its ancient ideals.

In short, though Moscow may be said to be in the fifteenth century, in some respects it has not advanced beyond the eighth century. Still, if many of its features are barbarous, they are picturesque also. I felt this when I last stood upon the terrace of the gold-tipped monument to Alexander II., overlooking the ancient city. February-mounded whites were peeping over the brim of a world of golden domes and a maze of haunting lines. I turned from this fascinating picture, and I found another and far less attractive one in the roads and footpaths, the dangerous condition of which reminded me of Great Britain in pre-Cæsar times. These primitive roads had affected some modern trappings by way of pretentious buildings, just as Hottentots are apt to affect Scotch trouserings by way of variety. Apparently Moscow's habits match its appearance. When it is not ecstatically caressing its thousands of icons, it is gathered at the Red Place assassinating Grand Dukes.

In the sacred city of the Czars, then, there is a great deal that conduces to the appreciation of art. There is also a strong feeling in support of national forms of art, to be found not only in artists themselves, but among the wealthy leaders of commerce. To this is partly due the successful establishment of the Moscow Art Experimental Theatre, while another explanation may be found in the system of organisation upon which the theatre is founded. Underlying this system is a spirit of thoroughness, co-operation, patient research, and love of work, from which it originally sprung and to which its present vitality is due. Like the Deutsches Theatre, Berlin, the Art Theatre of Moscow arose out of small beginnings. It owes its existence to a small band of enthusiasts who formed a society for a specific object, which has been pursued patiently and successfully ever since. The object was the systematic reform of the theatre in all its departments and the establishment of an ideal theatre ; that is, ideal so far as the particular reforms undertaken and the means to carry them out could allow. At the time of the formation of the society the theatre in Europe was beginning to seek a new direction. Moscow was in the van of the movement, and its group of enthusiasts fell in love with extreme and harmonious realism. They agreed to bring life on the stage as it had never been brought before. Accordingly, they resolved to get rid of the old-fashioned theatre, its out-of-date plays, scenery, actors, and laws, and to set out in search of new plays, new scenery, new acting, and new laws. They have found some of each. They have discovered new playwrights, mastered stagecraftsmanship, given scenery a new and important rôle, made the

actor obedient to the director's will, brought the spectator into the action of the play, united and harmonised everything—action, words, line and colour.

So the organisation grew, guided by the wisdom of its celebrated director, M. Stanislavsky. Gradually rumours of its extraordinary attempts to reform interpretation and stage setting attracted attention in other parts of Europe. Its new naturalistic methods of acting came as a revelation to a public long accustomed to the old conventions of the declamatory school, and surprised even those persons whom M. Antoine's advanced methods had prepared to accept them. Both the plays performed by the Moscow theatre, and the manner of performing them provided something new. Indeed, the extraordinary attention paid to the technique of acting, and the over-emphasis on detail and effect, came to most playgoers in the nature of a "new thrill." It was, in fact, carried so far as to border on extravagance, and there were critics who did not hesitate to declare that the performance of Shakespeare would be just as good if acted in dumb-show. Thus, there seemed a danger of promoting the mimo-drama at the expense of the word-drama, when further developments took place.

The time had come for a reaction against the naturalistic method, and a number of young actors, artists, poets, and musicians united to revolt against the methods of the Moscow theatre. About the same time there arose in St Petersburg the theatre of Kommisarzhevsky, established by the distinguished actress of that name. Madame Kommisarzhevsky dreamt of a spiritual theatre. Her dreams were not however fulfilled, and the new theatre appeared about to collapse, when



STUDY BY
AUGUSTE
CHABAUD.



THE MOSCOW THEATRE
PRODUCTION OF THE
"BLUE BIRD."
COSTUME DESIGN FOR
"FIRE" BY EGOROV.

it received a fresh recruit from Moscow in the person of M. Meierholdt. The latter came armed with a new ideal, which he termed "Stylisation." According to this ideal, M. Meierholdt sought to reverse the aims of the Moscow theatre by applying those of the short-lived Stoudia Theatre. | The latter theatre was a Moscow protest against the realistic theatre. | The threefold aim of the band of Impressionists who founded it, was synthetisation, simplification, and suggestion. Scorning realism, these newcomers engaged in the search for the fundamental rhythm to be developed and expressed in everything—voice, gesture, setting, costumes, and so forth. The scene was to be represented by a few essentials expressing the inner synthesis of period and phenomenon. Thus words, gestures, movements, decorations, costumes, all were to be set vibrating in unison. | The Stoudia Theatre was, however, never more than a laboratory, to which the public was not admitted. It closed its doors, and its activities were transferred for a time to the new theatre at St Petersburg, where stylisation, aiming to give everything in the scene the harmonious style of a conventional type and the immobility of the ancient Greeks, became the rage. Beyond this, there was an attempt to create in the spectator a consciousness of the theatre as opposed to the object of the Moscow Art Theatre, namely, that of leading the spectator to be conscious of the drama and to forget the theatre. The new theatre had to contend with one great difficulty. There were no plays that fully met the demands of immobility or stylisation.

The time had also come for the drama to find a new individual expression, and Tchekoff added a fresh impulse

to the modern school. Tchekoff practically recreated the Moscow Art Theatre and inspired it anew with his genius. It may be that his lyricism came at the right moment to balance its over-naturalism, and thus enabled it to avoid being sloughed in the rut of the brutal realism of Gorki, and to pass easily from this to the symbolism of Ibsen and, later, Maeterlinck. In any case, his peculiar genius for the stage and the extraordinary technique of his plays, so admirably adapted to the natural methods of the players, brought the first great success to the Moscow theatre, upon which it has never looked back. In gratitude it has adopted "The Sea-Gull" for a crest. Tchekoff practically created an immobile form of drama, and with his arrival at the Moscow theatre came a new era of stage-production. All the newly created traditions and principles of staging were readjusted, in order to produce the requisite atmosphere of immobility. So, from the appearance of Tchekoff, the work of the theatre has gone on, everyone concerned apparently concentrating on the task of creating a perfectly organised theatrical centre, answering to a university of dramatic art, as well as to a national theatre.

The first time I was shown over the theatre the question naturally arose: How is the theatre physically equipped? The answer was brief. Beyond a complete and up-to-date electric-room, and the three principal features of the Deutsches Theatre, Berlin, the revolving stage, the round or concave horizon, and the new horizon lighting, it has but little of special interest. It is spacious throughout, and restful. Its foyer and corridors are spacious, and its general architectural features compare favourably with the best type of modern

theatre. It has a very large stage—larger indeed than that of His Majesty's Theatre, London,—provided with a revolving centre. In the evident desire, shown in the number and variety of electric appliances, to solve the problems of lighting by the application of the latest advances in electro technique, it passes at once from the conventional theatre to the laboratory. Perhaps here the problems of stage-lighting, seen in the attempt to obtain the effect of direct sunlight or diffused light, a truthful distribution of light and shadow, are nearest solution. From the physical I turned to the mental equipment of the theatre. How is the theatre mentally organised and equipped? With a rare union of the artistic and the practical, was the reply. Both the directors, managers, and every member of the staff appear to be liberally endowed with taste, judgment, patience, and perseverance. The decorators and electricians understand the laws of the stage and the demands of the scenic materials. Even the wigmaker and costumier are artists, unlike the London samples, who are merely tradesmen.

The efficiency, thoroughness, aims, and methods of the heads of the departments were such as to recall those of the principals of a well-organised university, which for the purpose of examination might be divided into three main parts—the head, body, and members. They are seen to be the direct outcome of a culture organisation, consisting of directors, stage-managers, electricians, actors, extras, and general staff, whose chief aim is to promote the culture of theatre work and to produce the all-round practical artist, the highest type of which being the ideal director who has gone through

every department, excepting, perhaps, that of the poet and painter. Given a combination of heads of departments of the sort, and the impossible may be achieved. This was what the able secretary, M. Lykiardopoulos, led me to believe when he pointed to the amazing results arising from the constant study of technique in this laboratory of technical ideas. He reminded me that *The Blue Bird* had taken two years to produce, and *Hamlet* had occupied no less than three years, during which time there had been a constant and patient research into natural and symbolic effects, a thorough testing and rejecting of every known idea and method, and the inventing of others till those are found according to the conception of a unified and harmonious production. In this way the *Hamlet* ideas of Mr Gordon Craig had been materialised. It seems that Mr Craig has been accustomed to send his ideas along, and the management has taken them and patiently and persistently given them effect. The extreme difficulty of the undertaking will be fully understood by those who know the indefinite character of Mr Craig's ideas as expressed, say, in his designs for stage costumes. Such designs are the despair of the well-meaning wardrobe mistress.

It did not require a deep penetration to see that the company trained under this theatre-university system has also the artistic and practical character. Indeed, the system has bred in it an extraordinary love of the theatre and drama. To its members the theatre is a centre affording facilities for probing the most intimate secrets of the dramatic form of art. They live, work, and play in the theatre. To them the

theatre is a sort of preparatory school, where they study during the day and play principal parts or walk-on at night. They may be divided into head pupils, secondary pupils, and probationers—those waiting to be admitted. They are always in the theatre, and attend every rehearsal, watching and learning. They are taught the essentials of acting and speaking, and are trained in the movements of the Jaques-Dalcroze system of dancing. They adopt the round-table method of studying a play and learning their parts, and thus come together in conference, as it were, for the purpose of analysing and assimilating the part and the whole. How different this is from the London system, according to which to the English actor the theatre only spells treasury! He is forbidden the theatre except at special moments. As a rule, he is rigorously kept out of the auditorium and sometimes off the stage while rehearsals are on, and is given a detached fragment of the play to study, which he must learn either at home, when the missus is shopping and the “kids are abed,” or during rehearsals, balanced on one leg supporting the scenery, or in the nearest pot-shop over a convivial beer in pewter. Ask a London actor for particulars of the play in which he is appearing, and he will invariably tell you he knows nothing about it, except what is contained in his own “bit.” He is “called” for the act or acts in which he appears, and is not expected to turn up on any other occasion. In consequence, he knows less about a whole of which he is supposed to be a unified and harmonious part, than the spectator. In Moscow the actors are artists who passionately love their form of art, and together they form an efficiently organised company,

each member of which is fully acquainted with the traditions of the theatre, and fully prepared to form any part of a harmonious whole. They embody efficiency and uniformity in the highest degree.

It was watching the rehearsals of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and of Tolstoi's latest play, *A Living Corpse*—another but not very original shot at the fallacies of the marriage-tie—that led me to the consideration of the plays which the Moscow Theatre produces, and the methods of producing them and the manner of performing them. A glance at the long list of authors revealed that, as I have already mentioned, three classes of plays are treated—the realistic, romantic, and the symbolic. Though the method of presentation varies according to the essential character of each play, the method of production is mainly on one line—the analytico-psychological. The theatre was, in fact, intended as a psychological theatre, to give on the one hand a natural, and on the other hand a symbolic, expression of the psychology of each play. Accordingly the scenes are either minutely analysed, just as a body is dissected out, but all the parts kept together, or they are symbolised, as in *The Blue Bird*. The setting follows the same method, expressing as faithfully as possible the realistic or symbolic character of the scenes. If the former, it preserves the principles of simplification while presenting a synthesis of that which is being analysed. By this means the immobility or actionless character of the Tchekoff type of play is repeated in the background, which remains static instead of being dynamic, and synthesises the whole of the fragments or parts of which the scene is composed. The “scene” is unified



STUDY BY
ANDRÉ DERAIN.

and harmonised realistically by colour, line, and lighting, symbolically by perspective and lighting. The acting is on similar lines. Just as each scene, each effect, is the result of long and patient research and unity of conception, so each part is built up by careful study. Its individual character is sought and found and given proper proportion and relation to other parts, just as each gesture, each nuance, is brought into relation to the whole expression. The smallest innovation is submitted to experiment and accepted or rejected accordingly.

It was while sampling the excellent lunch that the management provides for its company, including the extra people, during rehearsals, that I arrived at the question of economics. How are the actors paid? How treated? What advantages do they derive from the co-operative or profit-sharing system of the theatre? Without going into figures, it may be said they receive adequate remuneration. Even the "walks-on" are paid a living wage. The eighteen-shilling-a-week-find-all-your-own-fashionable-modern-wardrobe-extra-people are unknown. Furthermore, they are paid for rehearsals and fed during rehearsals. There are no long periods of semi-starvation and walking home at daybreak after fifteen hours' wearisome rehearsal, as in London, where professionals rehearse sometimes nine and ten weeks at a time without payment of any sort. Show me the British workman who would work strenuously nine weeks for nothing. The members of the Moscow Theatre enjoy the further advantage of a profit-sharing system. They start as students, and, having graduated, they are allotted a certain number of shares in the theatre, and so acquire a vested interest in it.

In this way they are much nearer to an Actors' Union than were Messrs G. B. Shaw and Granville Barker when they tried to reconstruct the Actors' Association and succeeded in wrecking it.

That the general position of the Moscow Art Theatre and the results from the system of organisation are satisfactory is beyond question. The theatre is financially supported, and has been from the start, by a number of public-spirited citizens. It is in the hands of shareholders, and its financial affairs are administered by a Board of Directors. The capital is vested in a stock company comprised of business men. But these shareholders are not merely business men—they are enthusiasts, like the millionaires who founded the New Theatre. They are not out for profit, they do not look for an immediate financial return for their money so much as for the artistic prosperity of the theatre, being largely guided in this by the prevailing nationalistic feeling. The efficient handling of the theatre is beginning to tell. It is now a paying concern, and this without puffs of any sort. It attracts large audiences, and influences them. Moreover, the management proposes to build a new theatre at a cost of £100,000. Such a proposal coming from a theatre devoted to art is sufficient to convert even the most cast-iron Philistine to the view that there is money in artistic ideals. Some day, when the Moscow Theatre Company has concluded its forthcoming European tour, this truth will dawn upon commercial-minded enthusiasts, who will then cease to subsidise the purely commercial theatre, and will support the art theatre instead. Perhaps they may be led to study the admirable system of theatre organisation

upon which the Moscow Art Theatre is based. And, if so, they will discover that the system is one of the best—

- (1) For founding, developing, and directing an artistic theatre.
- (2) For the development and improvement of stagecraft and stage machinery.
- (3) For the production of the efficient director, managers, decorators, and mechanics.
- (4) For the training of the actor.
- (5) For artistic and scientific experiments in light, sound, and movement.

In short, for obtaining the best means for the widest representation of the drama, and the best possible results from such a representation.

There is also the inference from the organisation that the wrong people are being invited to patronise art and drama in England. Here both art, drama, and literature are under the direct control of academic minds, with the result that but little hope can be entertained of an advance being made in the desired direction. Neither art nor drama rises to new and higher things on ancient stepping-stones of their dead selves. It is a flagrant mistake to assume anything of the sort. I maintain that art and artistic drama lives in new forms alone, and such forms need new powers of vision, of interpretation, of appreciation. They need, indeed, the vision and interpretation of young, vigorous, and independent minds. These are what both art, drama, and the theatre need to-day. They need beyond this an entirely new type of

patron, and till this patron comes forward the outlook for art and drama in this country will be anything but rosy. Personally, I would like to see an aristocratic form of patronage, such as existed during the Stuart dynasty and was so largely stimulated by the art-loving Stuart kings. But though I press for the patronage of an aristocracy of brains, I also press for money to accompany the brains. To-day, patrons with money and no brains are practically useless. The economic fallacies of the past generation or two have strengthened the general conviction that it is useless to have ideas without the money to carry them out. In an ideal State the conviction will doubtless be reverted to: it is useless to have money without the intelligence necessary to circulate it. By the time the latter conviction is reached, money will have ceased to circulate altogether.

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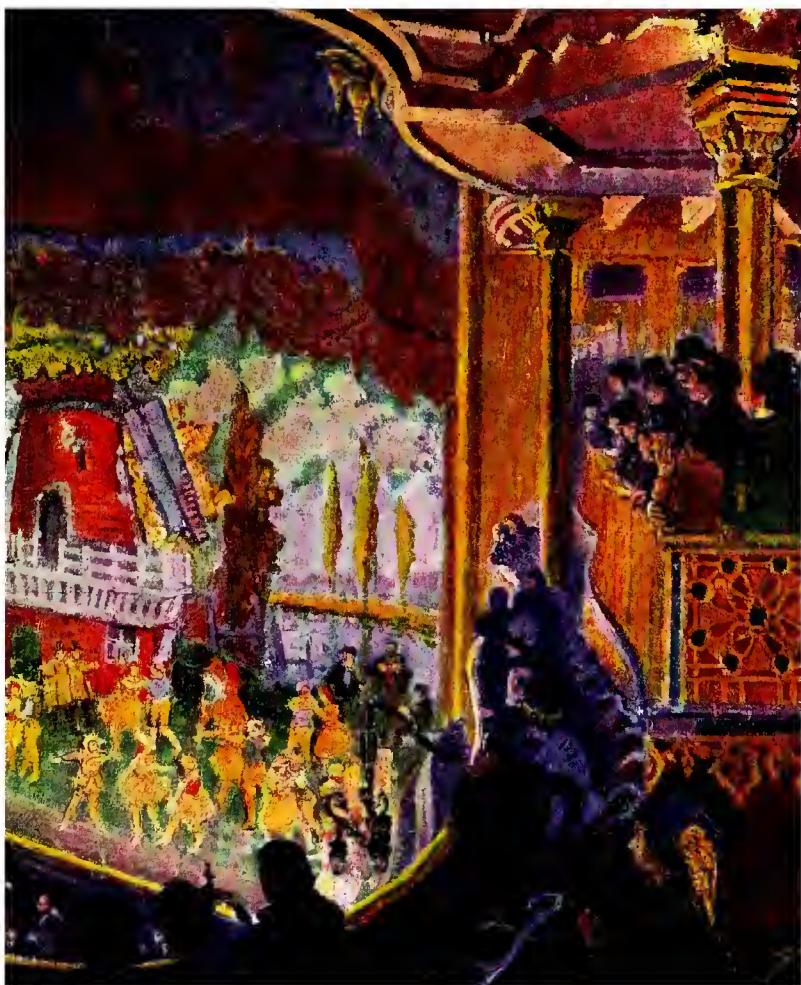
THE NEW SPIRIT IN PAINTING

The Autumn Salon and the relation between the advanced movements in painting and in the theatre.

WHEN I started across Europe in quest of the golden sensation of unity, continuity, and completeness in the Art Theatre, I was prepared for disappointment. Before the coming of the Russian Ballets I had looked for it in vain. I had, in fact, been led to the conclusion that the prevalent view in the theatre is : Art is an adjunct to the drama ; it is a copy or fake of the emotional interest. The view had robbed me of the big, complete sensation which every play production should produce, for it had offered me dramatic fare in detached masses, being unable to bring them together into that organic relation which the sensation demanded. As I anticipated, the view was prevalent all over Europe. I was therefore obliged, in order to realise the desired experience, to return to Paris for it. Here I knew I should find it, not in the theatre, but in the exhibition gallery. In the spring of the year I met the Post-Expressionists, whose works once more proclaimed the fact that to one body of artists, at least, art is not an accessory to life ; it is life itself, carried to the greatest heights of personal experience.

So I came to Paris in order to make a brief study of the methods in use for attaining unity, continuity, and completeness, and beyond this to trace the adoption of the new conception of decoration, and to determine how it was likely to contribute to the artistic movement in the theatre. I had previously noticed there was a vital connection between the advanced movement in painting and the movement in the theatre which, once established, would bring about a union of the two, set them mutually acting and reacting upon one another, and tend to remove all difficulties to the proposal to lift the theatre into the region of art. My subsequent observations in Paris led me to the conclusion that rhythm is the connecting link between plastic forms of art and the "scene," and the continuous and consistent search for this is hourly bringing them closer together.

The present point of approach between the artistic scene and the advanced movement in painting is to be found in the new conception of decoration. The object of the advanced movement in painting is to give the widest possible expression to the fundamental note or rhythm of each subject treated. The New Men, especially in Paris, are working on the assumption that the expressiveness of the immediately preceding centuries was far too narrow; and the Old Men did not give their subjects that psychological width of expression which the subjects themselves demanded, and they made the mistake of giving each object in a picture a structural unity of its own, and neglected to bind the whole composition together by one big unified design. They assume, too, that the Old Men made the fundamental error of elevating beauty where truth alone



should be. With the New Men truth is the ruling passion. They maintain that truth is its own reward. If they seize the truth of a fundamental conception, their logical method of treatment will enable them to develop it truthfully and to give it the widest possible expression of truth. If they seize an untruth, their treatment of it will likewise detect it, and the result will be untruth. Further, they maintain the subject requires nothing beyond this truthful statement, none of the extraordinary adjuncts that the Old Men were accustomed to embody on canvas. Decoration, as we are accustomed to call it, must be nothing more than the reasonable development of its character. In fact, their decoration to them is not decoration, but the truthful expression of character. Thus the New Men are inclined to regard decoration from the point of view of the actor. The latter never speaks of decoration. He regards and refers to everything worn by a human being in terms of character. To him a dress, a piece of jewellery, the arrangement of the hair, are outward expressions of inner psychological states. In his opinion, anything worn that does not express character is superfluous.

The present object of the artistic movement in the theatre is to beautify the scene by reducing everything in it to order by means of unity, harmony, and simplification. There are two methods of obtaining artistic unity in present use. One is the method of obtaining the unifying effect of perspective and lighting favoured by Mr Gordon Craig ; the other is the method of obtaining the unifying effect of design in line and colour employed by the big Russian decorators, Bakst, Benois, Roerich, and so forth. The first method is that which most

of the Continental advanced theatres are applying. It is the least satisfactory, for two reasons. In the first place, the three-sided stage does not readily admit of a true perspective, and it is extremely difficult to add the third dimension, depth, to the stage picture, and this largely owing to the presence of the actor. The actor does not diminish in proportion to the diminishing landscape, and as he moves up stage he increases enormously in size against the little thread of distant landscape, and one awakens to the fact that the scene has two dimensions, not three.

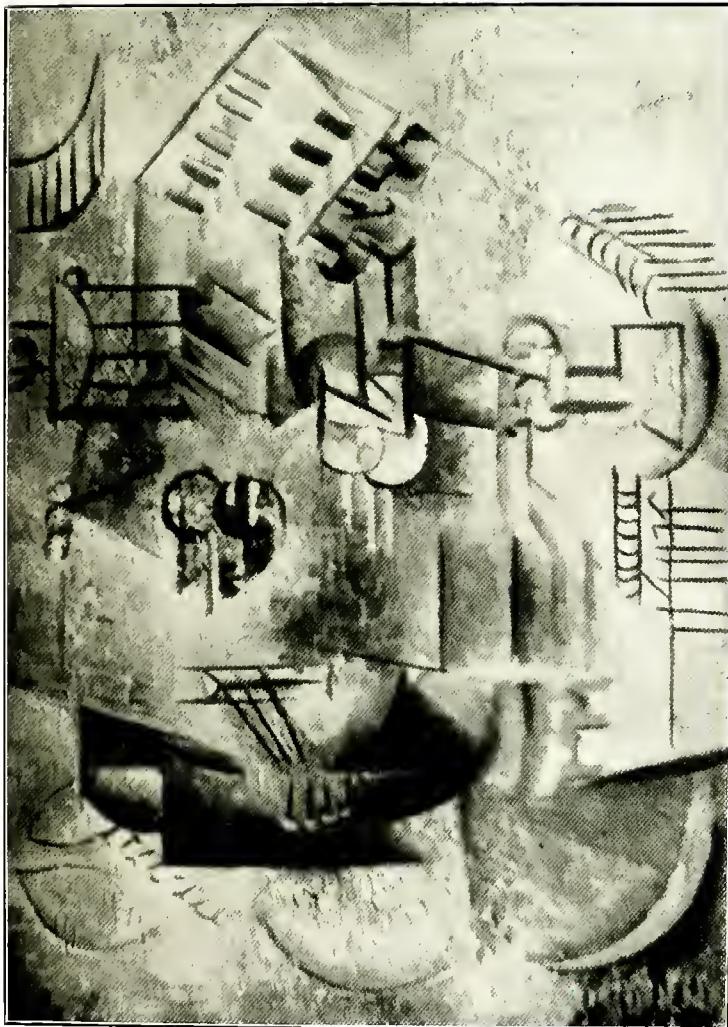
Till the actor does diminish with the receding landscape, the illusion of perspective cannot be maintained. In the second place, unity of effect obtained by perspective and lighting does not lend itself to continuity. It produces in each scene a separate atmosphere, having nothing to do with that of the preceding or succeeding scene. In consequence, there is not a progressive growth or continuity of "scenes." Disjointed scenic atmosphere of this kind is the least suitable environment for a modern form of drama which moves from beginning to end without a break, and naturally demands to be aided by a structural unity answering to its own. Moreover, according to this method when applied on a large scale, the figures in a scene become mere adjuncts instead of being the dominant note.

The second method is that which has been developed and applied successfully to the Russian Ballets and by the Indépendants at the Théâtre des Arts, Paris. It is by far the best method at present, and this for one important reason, at least. In the first place, according to this method, every-

thing is reduced to order and bound together by a structural unity of line and colour, which, starting with the first act, may be logically developed through the succeeding acts to a logical climax moving at the same rate and on the same level of progression as the action of the drama itself, which it thus serves to supplement and to widen in a manner not possible to a broken sequence of scenes, each of which is bound separately by an atmospheric unity of its own. For illustrations of my meaning, reference may be made to the Russian Ballets, Ibsen, and Wyspianski.

The application of this method not only enables the fundamental note or *leitmotiv* of a play to be seized and developed harmoniously throughout, in corresponding motives, both in the music, acting, scenery, and accessories, but it gives the characters their due importance as dominant notes, not as adjuncts. In this way the music, acting, scenery, accessories, and so forth, are made essential aids to wideness of expression, and gross, superfluous, and very often dominating unessentials which we term decorations are removed, and essential "decoration" is transformed and converted into refined adjuncts, adding a much-desired completeness of expression. Such adjuncts as music, colour, and line are then no longer accepted in the decorative sense. They are employed to yield that element of subconsciousness in a lyrical play which words and acting fail to yield. The music is not merely composed, the scenes are not merely arranged to accompany the action of the drama; they have the further purpose of forming a chorus, as it were, that feels and understands the interest of the action and keeps the

attention of the spectator alive in a state of dramatic tension. In short, though this method of attaining unity is similar to that employed by Wagner, it is really a great advance upon it. And when it is fully developed it will be found to supersede Wagner's method altogether. Then the threefold motive of the Wagner music-drama running concurrently in the music, singing, and scenery, each of which competes loudly at the same time for favour, will be replaced by a handling of the threefold motive according to which everything in a play representation may be so arranged as either to proclaim aloud, or else to suggest unheard, so to speak, the interest of the plot. Thus, where the words fail, the interest will be supported by the music welling to the surface for the purpose. When words and music fail, then the interest will be carried on by colour, or line, or by both. If these are dumb, then the power of movement will be felt. Of course, all these elements will move together throughout the play, but there must be a certain subordination of each in turn, a certain lowering of the tone of the one for the sake of heightening the tone of the other. In addition to the importance of this method in fully evolving the emotional content of the drama, one may take note of the effect it may have upon the modern conception of the scene as a picture framed by the proscenium opening. In accepting the view that a play only needs such musical and scenic effects as afford it the widest expression, the reformer will turn from the present notion of a stage picture so limited to the imperfect structure of the stage, and so dependent for truth of effect upon a solution of the problems of perspective and



STUDY OF MANDOLIN
AND GLASS ON TABLE
BY PICASSO.

lighting and of sight-line. In the latter case the problem is that of the stage-picture seen from widely different angles according to the structural formation of the auditorium, which affects the spectator's view of the stage-picture, whether of composition of tone, or colour, or line, or of all three. In the conventional theatre, the stage is split up into innumerable divisions, from below, above, and at the sides. Only the spectator seated centre, and above the level of the stage, can realise the subtle unity of the combination of these. The reformer will, therefore, seek other scenic effects and improvements in the application of them. Following the example of the early Egyptians, he will substitute the virile mystery of things seen in blinding light and colour for the lifeless mystery of things seen in foggy darkness.

It was at the Salon d'Automne, amid the Rhythmists, I found the desired connection. The exuberant eagerness and vitality of their region, consisting of two rooms remotely situated, was a complete contrast to the rooms I was compelled to pass through in order to reach it. Though marked by extremes, it was clearly the starting-point of a new movement in painting, perhaps the most remarkable in modern times. It revealed not only that artists are beginning to recognise the unity of art and life, but that some of them have discovered life is based on rhythmic vitality, and underlying all things is the perfect rhythm that continues and unites them. Consciously or unconsciously, many are seeking for the perfect rhythm, and in so doing are attaining a liberty or wideness of expression unattained

through several centuries of painting. By the time I had reached these conclusions, the Expansionists, as I may now call them, had sorted themselves into groups answering to the difference in expression of the general aim. These I will name, for convenience, Radiationists, Crystallisationists, Vibrationists, Rhapsodists.

I was compelled to place the Radiationists first. They grasped me so powerfully with their knowledge of unity and continuity carried to such a state of perfection that escape was impossible. Thus John D. Fergusson's "Rhythm" first swept me out of myself, away from the battling-ground of paint and canvas into the immensity of the infinite. The splendid movement and vitality of this canvas was irresistible. It proclaimed the power with which this painter sets his seal upon his form of art, and singled him out as easily foremost among the strong men of Paris. It revealed his astonishing gift of seizing the fundamental rhythm of a character or scene, of concentrating on it, and of developing it in form and colour till the whole canvas rings with the magic of motion. Here the rhythm of the nude figure placed in the centre of the composition is felt, and the curves of line and colour flow out from it and on without end, creating a sense of an illimitable sea. Thus they pass from the powerfully drawn central motive to the arched tree of life, to the harmonious apples of discord, thence swelling out into the draperies, and so radiating out of the canvas in fulness and richness of a wide range of colours, of a balance of shapes, and of a related order of movement, producing a tremendous effect of power. It is a triumph of the expression of the

universal in the particular. The same elements of unity and continuity proclaimed themselves in this painter's Still-Lifes, wherein his preference for lozenge-shape curves is strongly manifested, and his skill in giving a number of varied objects structural unity is clearly demonstrated. The ability to concentrate on the fundamental rhythm of a subject, and to develop it throughout as the main theme, is seen further in a small portrait study, broadly painted and very fine in movement and colour, though perhaps not so successful as another study of the same subject which I remember seeing elsewhere and cannot forget. In the latter, the swing of the green through the black hat, the spontaneity and splendid feeling of the whole thing, fascinated me as the subject must have fascinated the artist. From the portrait the eye wandered to an interesting study of flowers giving off radiations by means of subtly expressed colour. It afforded an instance of the new conception of a background created by the importance of the subject.

Once on the waves of rhythm, I was swept from canvas to canvas. Next the rhythmical music of Estelle Rice's "Nicoline," penetrating and subtle, charmed me with its air of the infinite. Like a symphony, beautiful in movement and colour, the subject expressed the radiations of a brilliantly coloured mind, and the treatment revealed how such a mind may be given to the artist for decoration in the latest sense without fear that the truth of its character will be disgraced. It proved, indeed, that Miss Rice is the one strong woman painter in Paris who can subordinate decoration to truth and can cover a canvas with the essential facts of character.

brilliantly stated in line and colour. In "Nicoline" the circling waves of very subtle blues, pinks, and greens expand into the background, reflecting the woman's mind like coloured shadows thrown on illuminated discs, and thus fill not only the canvas but the mind and the world for the time being of the observer. Surely this is the purpose of a good picture—not merely to illuminate the soul of the subject-matter, but to lift the spectator out of himself, to link him with the universal, and so to blot out for fleeting moments the unattractiveness of life. At any rate, it is the effect of Miss Rice's pictures. She knows how to set one journeying through an exhilarating universe even on a note of beautiful flowers.

In the subsequent consideration of the work of these two painters, of the vision of the subjects chosen, and the manner of handling them, I found it offered three or four contributions to the subject of the composition of the "scene." First, it revealed the characteristics of Will-impressionism and Will-expressionism, shown in intense concentration and expansion. Thereby it suggested that the movement in the theatre should be based, like the advanced movement in painting, upon the supremacy of the Will in art. It showed how the Will may subject a theme to itself and thereafter give it the widest expansion. And it afforded, moreover, an example of a logical mind reducing an accidental jumble of objects to order, and binding them together in one big rhythmic design. A second contribution was the suggestion that the background should be created by the importance of the subject. Every important theme contains its own background, which the truthful touch of the poet's or painter's hand will realise.



THE BOXERS, BY
A. DUNOYER-SEGONZAC.

But unimportant themes have no background worth troubling about, and any attempt to supply one is a stupid waste of time. This consideration leads to the third contribution, to be found in the suggestion that the treatment of character in art and drama involves regard to unity and continuity in its development. Apparently Mr Fergusson, Miss Rice, and other rhythmists are of the opinion that the choice of characteristics of a subject should not be limited to intrinsic attractions, but extended to extrinsic attractions that will add the essential wideness of expression and completeness. It appears that the Old Masters confined themselves to an expression of the physical, moral, and intellectual attractions contained in an individual, without bothering to relate him to the environment. But the New Men claim they are justified in adding extrinsic attractions to which the individual is bound by the law of association. Hence the latter relate the central object to all surrounding objects, which become an essential part of its character, whereas the Old Men gave every single object in a composition an importance and structural unity of its own. A house is one thing, a tree another, a sky another, and each is so treated that we may view it in separation. The difference between the old and the new, vision and interpretation, is that of seeing and doing in detail and mass. The Old Men were concerned with detail-impressionism and detail-expressionism ; the New Men with mass-impressionism and mass-expressionism. As with painting, so with the " scene." At present the latter is mostly seen and composed in detail. It is a jumble of odds and ends that contribute nothing to the main theme. It should be conceived and executed in mass, and everything selected

and adapted to the main end in view. This treatment will be adopted as soon as its emotional bearing is understood.

Many useful suggestions were also forthcoming from the new Vibrationists, represented by M. Picabia. I was not greatly impressed with this painter's big study. It had nothing at the edges to carry off its four or five figures. There they stood vibrating on the yellowish-white sands, against the wide stretch of blue, flat sea. But its brightness was supreme ; and it is in the expression of such brightness that M. Picabia exceeds all the scientific Impressionists. I could imagine the latter persons coming to examine "*Sur la Plage*" with astonishment, and being obliged to peer at it through smoked goggles. I much preferred the same painter's "*Jardin.*" It very successfully illustrated the new expression of vibrating light by the apparent interchange of masses. "*Jardin*" is full of the clash of direction and of colour. The juxtaposed masses, deep purples, violaceous shadows, fawn half-lights, fleeting clouds of greens and yellows, come and go, cross and recross, with the force of piston-rods. It is as though one took the flat sails of a fishing-fleet, gave each set a different colour—red, green, blue, yellow, violet,—and made them move against each other on a heavy ground swell. The clash and movement would be sufficient to rivet the most untutored mind. The canvas throws its will upon the spectator as few canvases do. The action of de Segonzac's "*Boxers*" was another successful example of the will to power. There was no mistake about the strength and completeness of this canvas. When I looked at it I was conscious of a succession of stinging blows.

They rained upon me from all parts of the canvas. Not only from the combatants in the foreground, but from the mind of the audience symbolised in the background by a tremendous direction of swishing line.

This successful attempt to attain a big direction of line was succeeded by a remarkable instance of the subordination of colour to form.

In M. de la Fresnaye's "Passage," an important landscape in which the form (to which the colour was subordinated) was determined by a central object of vision, namely, a spherical tower. The tower had undertaken to arrange the landscape on its own lines, and had done so in a very business-like fashion. So the picture spread itself out, and the lines of the central design swept out and upward, communicating themselves with those of M. de la Fresnaye's faceted "Figure nue" above. I use the term faceting in this case, though M. de la Fresnaye is really a Crystallisationist. In this study he is a lapidary in paint. He sees the light at certain angles, and emphasises it in order to bring out the character of the subject. Character from the average point of view means drawing. Faceting means the essential character of light and form. Crystallisation best expresses the character of two extraordinary studies by Français Duchamp. His "Portrait" and "Jeune Homme et Jeune Fille dans le printemps" form, so to speak, studies in light crystallised into different forms, having different meanings. There is a great feeling of life in them, not earthly, but spiritual, and the play of light is tremendous. There is also a certain kind of ecstasy, as of figures emerging from a radiant

source, rising and expanding upward. And crystallised masses would have this appearance when embraced by dazzling light. The feeling is heightened by the very subtle and mellow light amber tone in which the figures are bathed. Something of the same subtle feeling for light also made itself felt in the important Fauconnier near by. The "Village dans la Montagne," with its crystallised landscape, had wonderful direction. Just opposite to this was a stupid production by M. Albert Gleizes, consisting of an academic drawing, with cubes stuck all over it. This *is* cubism, if you like. The so-called cubism is a development of the cube root ; a very different affair.

There were also the new Hungarian Rhapsodists adding suggestions in spontaneity, colour, and movement. Masses of colour, boldly expressed, characterise the Hungarian rhapsody, a "Passage," by Valy Denes. Truly it may be said this picture rocked with intoxication. The artist had felt the intoxication of the light on a cadmium wall. Then he had taken the surrounding buildings as Samson might do, and set them rocking in space, just introducing the right touches of yellow to hold them together. The composition had the air of a wild Hungarian melody. There was a Liszt in every line and note of colour. Another study revealed him fascinated by the idea of an intoxicated little cadmium house communicating its intoxication to the surrounding romantic landscape. The sense of drunkenness was so complete that I found myself looking round for a blue Hungarian policeman.

Ideas of unity and continuity were also forthcoming from Van Dongen's "Un Fond," charged with the hot passion of

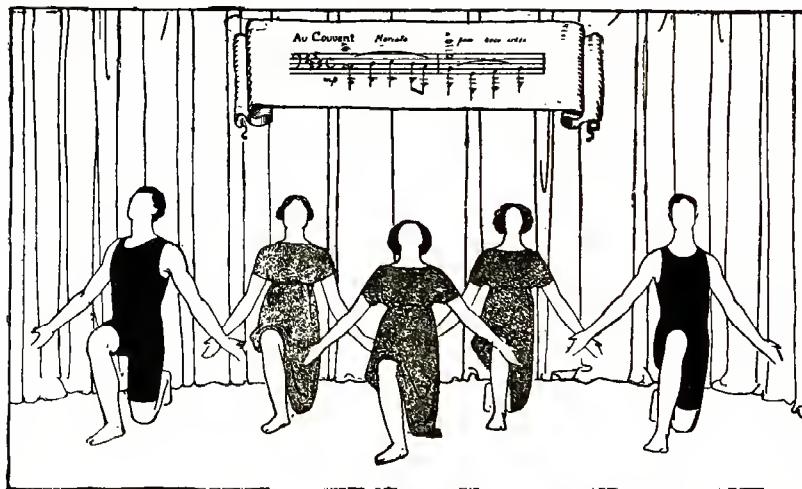


STUDY BY
OTHON FRIESZ.

dazzling flowers whirling like catharine-wheels, rockets, and showers of fire in the midst of the darkness of an annihilated background. From Othon Friesz's network of subtle associations linking man to rocks, water, ships, and air. From Chabaud carving out his emotional intellect in tense figures in solid blocks. From S. J. Peploe preoccupied with brilliant colour, and flogging his canvas with strokes of pure yellow till the canvas radiates and flings its light and colour upon the spectator, and holds him with its illusion till long after his eyes have sought and become accustomed to other subjects. Here, indeed, is *still-life*; the other stuff is still-born. And from the two studies by Georges Banks, who was seen drawing aside the curtain on daring and disturbing moods and revealing just the sort of work to give the spectator awkward moments. Indeed, she appeared to be engaged in the congenial task of running the spectator up to the dome of St Paul's in order to drop him over the gallery. In the "Théâtre des Arts," for instance, an unusually clever piece of work having an air of completeness, the strong direction of line and colour seems to proclaim the fact that the study is about to walk out of the frame. But directly that wandering red begins to work, the whole thing is seen to be a trap. The red seizes the unwary spectator by the coat-collar, runs him round the border as though making for an egress to the left, and then suddenly drops him bang on to the signpost, whence he rebounds on to the red spot on the man with the bugle, which kicks him into the centre, bleeding and helpless. It is the same with the original all-blue route round the composition with the yellow building,

green men, and pink snow. It leads the spectator so often to that smudge in the corner of the building that at last he sees a significance in it and asks why the painter did not develop the idea contained in it. Surely here is the fundamental note of the whole structure. The root of the action is contained in that cloud suggesting the idea of destruction or reconstruction, as the case may be, which underlies the central motive—the building. Treated in this way, the subject would enable the artist to give us a full taste of her skilful draughtsmanship.

The general impression from these samples of the work of the extremists was that the artistic and emotional effects of scene compositions will gain a great deal if attained through the application of the new principles of painting. It seems that both the extremists and the new theatre decorators are seeking an external harmony that will express the internal harmony of a subject. Hitherto external harmony divorced from internal harmony has been the thing.



The Dalcroze System of Dancing.

Design by M. Théveney.

XV

SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

THE points of the artistic movement in the theatre that have already come under notice in this book are chiefly these:—

1. The widespread attempt to retheatralise the theatre (France, Germany, Austria, Russia, etc.).
2. A corresponding desire to redramatise the drama (Wyspianski, Tschekoff, the fantasy play in London).
3. A general plea for a new attitude in the spectator (Reinhardt's Theatre of the five thousand, Moscow Art Theatre).

The first is based on the assumption that the theatre is a necessary adjunct to the drama, to which it must add widest artistic expression. The second, that the play has lost its dramatic form and lyrical element, and needs the theatre to give these the widest expression. The third, that the spectator has lost the theatre habit, and must get accustomed to live not by or in, but for the theatre.

Arising from the first assumption is a general movement on the Continent towards raising the theatre to the level of other forms of art, and towards bringing truth and beauty into it. Along with this goes the desire to add a spiritual

element to the scene, and thus make it more mystical, either according to the old indefinite form, or to the newer definite form of mysticism. The general movement may be sharply divided into two main branches of activity :—

1. The reform of the housing of the drama (the Wagner, Kunstler, and Zehsches theatres).
2. The reform of the setting of the drama (Craig, Reinhardt, and Russian Ballets).

The primary intention of the first is to promote the idea of intimacy in the theatre by evolving a stage and auditorium that will serve to preserve in the spectator the mood created by the play. The primary intention of the second is also to foster mood. The method employed—namely, of visualisation, or the expression of the beauty or truth of phenomena in pictorial form, either realistically or symbolically—necessitates a treatment entirely from the artist's point of view. Thus there is the attempt to frame stage-pictures in rectangular frames, and to add a third dimension, or depth, to them. And there is the application of the principles of simplification, synthesis, suggestion, and of the qualities of style, and the aim to attain more intelligent ideas in the use and economy of materials.

The quest of the stage picture is also along two main lines of activity : the search—

1. For the unifying effect of perspective and lighting (*The Blue Bird*).
2. For the unifying effect of design in line and colour (Russian Ballets).

It should be noted that there are two forms of stage picture:

1. The picture in the flat, the product of the realistic drama (G. B. Shaw).
2. The picture in the round, the product of the sculptured drama (Ibsen).

The first requires the conventional three-sided stage. The second requires a new and circular form of stage, such as that outlined in suggestion 5.

Though both the aforementioned activities agree on the use of either realistic or symbolic form and colour, there is a difference between them, as follows:—The first is in accordance with the idea that Nature is of chief importance, and consequently Man should be subordinated to Nature, as in Breughel's pictures, wherein human beings are mere spots against the landscape. The decorator accordingly conceives the “scene” in vague mass. If he wants a landscape for “*Lear*,” he does not go to *Lear* for materials and suggestions, but to Nature. And Nature supplies him with a landscape having the breadth and depth of a Turner and the atmosphere of a Whistler. The decorator sees the gross majesty of it in mass, imagines the vast, forbidding stretch of country set with towering stone, and framed in tragic sky and masked with tragic mist. Then, when he has imagined this great form, he begins to fill in suggestive details, adding man last as a very necessary Voice. Thus he works to get space, air, emptiness, masses of light and shade, using such adjuncts as bare, flat walls and pillars beginning and ending nowhere and silhouetted against big, empty skies, vast

doorways, dim chambers hung with vast draperies through the slender openings of which glimpses of eternity are caught, and peopled with shadowy figures. In short, he makes for atmosphere in bulk. In this way he is largely dependent upon reasonable Nature effects—sunrises and sunsets, stars, constellations, moons, sea, mountains, plains, and so forth,—Nature at rest and in motion. Also upon a feeling for vastness and nobility of line. Needless to say, his search is really an impossible one ; that is, impossible on the conventional stage. And this largely owing to the fact that the new and complicated system of lighting necessary to this line of research cannot be laid down in the existing theatre. He wants a theatre suited to his particular architectonic plastic form.

It is different with the decorator who works according to the second method for attaining unity. He is concerned with the idea that Man is of chief importance, that the fundamental design of Nature is to be found in Man himself, and consequently everything should start with Man and work outwards. Therefore, when he is asked to design a scene or a sequence of scenes he first of all conceives his creation in essence, as a dominant line or note of colour, expressing character extracted from the Man. Then he imagines this note expanding, evolving spiral by spiral till it attains the widest expression of the original design of human character or mystery. So he attains the unifying effect of design in line and colour, and in so doing lays due emphasis on the importance of light, feeling, and movement. This method of building up from the root rhythm is entirely different from that of conceiving the scene in bulk. The one means working forward towards



STUDY BY
PIELAN GIBB.

the great mass, the other working backwards from the mass. The Nature decorator invites Nature to bring the Cosmos on the stage ; while the Man decorator invites Man to bring the Cosmos on the stage. The first, aiming to represent a picture of vast corporeal dimensions veiled by the artistic devices of the utmost subtleties of light, requires a new form of theatre. The second, aiming to widen the human expression by means of a simple and splendid flow of melodious line and colour, can apply his method in the existing type of theatre, while a more artistic type is being developed.

I may offer the following suggestions towards realising the artistic movement ^{for a multiplying effect.} in the theatre in this country :—

1. The replacing of the financial theatre-owner by the cultured and wealthy patron.
2. The removal of the actor-manager system and the substitution of one that will allow the manager or director to travel for the purpose of investigating what is being said and done in the theatre.
3. The replacing of the schoolmaster idea of educating the spectator by the artistic idea of illuminating him.
4. The elevation of the theatre to the level of the Church.
5. The establishment of a new type of little theatre, circular in form, and having a movable stage in the centre. The fundamental idea of this theatre is to provide a simple organic structure (1) that will serve to foster the mood created by the drama, and so make the audience move in the same spiritual world as the actor ; (2) that will develop the new centrifugal or group drama—that is to say, a drama in which central character represents the dominant idea or emotion,

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seek primarily to afford decorative artists and art and crafts men an opportunity of exhibiting their productions.

Application.—1. Accordingly, a number of works of art, *i.e.* paintings, sculpture, and art and craft productions by artists with individual vision and power of interpretation, would be selected and hung for a month, at the end of which period they would be replaced by others. If the scheme is extended to the provinces, arrangements would be made for transferring the exhibition, after its month in London, to other cities in succession. Thus the work would be constantly circulated, and thus constantly brought before an increasingly wide, intelligent, and educated public.

2. A monthly reception to start each fresh exhibition and to bring artists and the public together.

3. A short lecture at each reception by a well-known artist.

Advantages.—

To Artists :

- (a) Set them free of certain exhibition gallery restrictions.
- (b) Bring them into touch with architecture and the theatre, and the requirements of architecture and the theatre, and so develop a very necessary school of decorative painting.
- (c) Bring them into direct contact with the very wide public of small picture buyers.

To the Public :

- (a) Enlighten it on the decorative movement.
- (b) Enable the patron of small means to acquire good works of art.

APPENDICES

I

ILLUSTRATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To several persons I am indebted for permission to reproduce the many and varied illustrations in this volume, the source of all of which it is my desire to acknowledge. The illustrations may be broadly divided into two sections: those which represent the new spirit in painting and those which represent the new spirit in the theatre. I have chosen, on the one hand, examples of the advanced ideas, and, on the other hand, also examples of the most recent ideas. It will be noticed that between the two there is a link which I believe is destined to bind both plastic forms of art and the art of the theatre together. It is an architectonic quality, or a feeling for organic design—the subordination of the parts to the whole design which forms the link. The paintings and drawings thus express a tendency directed more or less towards a solution of the new problems of unity, continuity, proportion, symmetry, and simplicity, or those of the æsthetic point of view, while assuring at the same time the human interest, as art always does.

It may be said that these æsthetic problems are only new

to modern forms of art. The search for rhythm and vitality began at a very early period of the world's history. The present movements in painting embody, in fact, a cry of "Back to origins!" where vitality may be found always ready to provide the artist with a foundation for a restart. It is indeed extremely doubtful if any of the movements or creative epochs in the history of painting have been more than restarts on old vital foundations. Such foundations were laid by the Primitives in the first flush of the world's history. In the Primitives art had nothing to do with dogmatism. It was free, lyrical, and full of a passion for simplicity. It expressed nothing of the tyranny of academic classicism—that hireling of modern times. Its followers did not worship at the shrine of dead men and dead ideas. They had new visions of life, and they sought to open new windows upon eternity. So these initiators laid a foundation of sincerity and truth for others that came after them to build upon. And the others—the continuators—came, built and built, till at last the foundation became buried beneath a superstructure of effete dogmatism. Then came others—re-initiators—who, burning with discontent, throbbing with energy and frenzied with the spirit of experiment, tore down the crazy superstructure of the continuators in order to begin again at the primitive structure. All this tumultuous movement of to-day, this clash of ideals and methods, reveals a tendency in keeping with the great initiative epochs of art. Examine the works of the advanced spirits, and we shall find abundant evidence of a close and sincere search for first principles. In the early Chinese they have discovered rhythm, unity,



STUDY BY
LYONEL FEININGER.

continuity, and suggestion. The Egyptians have taught them love of essentials, simplification, positive mysticism, and decorative art forms. From the Greeks they have derived proportion, simplification, and style. From all the early sources they have drawn vitality.

If we conceive present-day artistic activity as based on such origins, and building thereon an intuitive superstructure, we have at once a clue to the whole line of development of the new leaders. Unlike their predecessors, they are not occupied with a scientific superstructure constructed on the theories of Chevreul and Helmholtz. They obey the eternal laws of art, vitality, and rhythm, but not in the same way. They take no interest in the science of complementary colour, do not seek to put red and green spots in scientific juxtaposition, and do not attempt to build up their pictures with touches of colour varying from a pin's-head to a half-a-crown. The artists of truth are moving towards the widest expression of æsthetic individualism, replacing scientific formula with self-expression. They are discarding the utility of things. Forced by the advance of photography, they are beginning to cultivate an æsthetical, contemplative mood of thought which offers truth in place of utility. Their search for rhythmic vitality is best expressed in the following extracts from Rudolf Eucken's *Life's Basis and Life's Ideal*: "Art has a difficult task given to it, which can only approximately be solved—the task of expressing something fundamentally inexpressible and resisting all attempts to give it form. But in that art undertakes such an impossibility and exerts its power to the uttermost, it brings about a refinement of the

soul as well as an enrichment of expression. It enables much to be grasped and comprehended which without it passes like a fleeting shadow. It permits the observation of the most delicate vibrations of the soul, and throws light into depths which would otherwise be inaccessible." "The present tendency is the tendency of work to occupy itself solely with externals, by which the culture of work has become sordid, secular, profane, and in contrast to that inspired by the soul." Many movements towards work internally inspired make themselves apparent. "The longing for a return of life to itself, for more joy and more depth of life, grows stronger and stronger." "Something is drawing man once more to the subjective and individual," urging him "to break away from organisations and boldly to develop with complete freedom what lies within him." "The individual can attain complete independence only when he liberates his soul from all external connections, from every objective relation, and, as a free subject, simply lives his own states of consciousness." If we wish to throw light on the working of the mind of the extremist, we must read it with the passages I have quoted.

Not yet freed of feudal tyrannies of all kinds, it is natural that persons who think in terms of feudalism should confuse a movement toward complete freedom with a revolt against feudal institutions. Historians, politicians, economists, persons with a peculiar literary twist, the stultified stylist, the irresponsible journalist, biologists, theologians, and the æsthetes have had their say. Alienists especially have sought to produce a sensation by suggesting that painting is on the wrong road

and a horrible fate is befalling us. Madness is eating into our vitals, and threatening to prove Voltaire's cynicism that if all the planets are inhabited, our planet is surely the mad-house. It is no wonder that the new work spoken of in this way is producing the effect of a nightmare even on persons who do not live in a fool's paradise. As an instance of this, I may quote the following passage from a portentous volume recently written by a medical man : "These post-impressionist pictures are not works of art at all. In them is the complete rejection of all culture, all history, all order, all valuing, all tradition. In the post-impressionists, art is already dead. It is indeed *more than dead*, it is putrefied. All the shape and form of its organs have fallen to pieces by a process of putrefaction. Its body can no longer be seen except as a mass of blotchy, discoloured, and shapeless masses and blobs." The writer, continuing in this strange fashion, says that he believes it is at its last stage, so "that there is a chance of improvement." If the end of what has been miscalled the epoch of post-impressionism (every painter who cannot possibly be regarded as of weak intellect has been an Impressionist), now at hand, presents the deplorable condition of being more than dead, how can there possibly be "a chance of improvement" ? Dr T. B. Hyslop of Bridewell and Bedlam has drawn a comparison between the artistic work of lunatics under his care and that of the Expressionists. Writers of this cast of mind would find traces of degeneracy in Whistler's dictum, "Art happens."

Beyond these uninformed critics there is another type,

the professional and anti-post-impressionist critic, who disbelieves in the latest developments of advanced painters because the basis of their methods does not appear to be that of the Old Masters. This outcry against the neglect by the New Men of the Old Men is stupid and wrong, as I shall show in my note on the Futurists. There are, of course, many sensational daubers who have no foundation, new or old, to work upon, and to these I shall also refer in the aforementioned note. That a painter should turn to the important Old Men, should study the eternal principles which underlie their works, and having mastered these should utilise them and reject all else and yet have his work considered as a sign of mental aberration, is too amazing for words. But this is what happens: the advanced painter is between the knowledge-man and the ignoramus. And if we conceive painters substituting vision for knowledge, the chief equipment of the old masters, replacing subject-matter seen in a flash for that studied with painful minuteness—the attitudes, faces, poses, the little flowers and shrubs and grasses in the foreground, the building in the middle distance, the clouds and the flies resting on them, all reproduced with the most determined and photographic correctness—we can estimate the bad time the Visionists are likely to continue to have between the representatives of knowledge and ignorance. They will be told, for one thing, that they should curb the extraordinary swift intuitive perception of the modern painter, and will be taught the evils of redundancy and the need of selection by persons whose idea of art is a bunch of carrots so minutely painted that every ass that looks at it invariably tries to take a bite.

From the following brief notes the reader may extract the main ideas of the artists, embodying the general aim towards which a large number of painters are striving.

Paris.—The studies by Picasso, Herbin, and Dunoyer-Segonzac first appeared in the *New Age*. To the editor of that journal, MM. Sagot and Kahnweiler of Paris, and the artists, I am indebted for permission to reproduce them in this volume. It was at my suggestion that they appeared in the *New Age*, where they caused a great deal of controversy. Elsewhere, Mr G. K. Chesterton in two long articles, and other well-known writers, condemned them, while equally important writers came forward in their defence, agreeing to accept them as serious works of art. Picasso was really the storm centre. Very few persons appeared to understand his aim. Those without artistic training of any sort merely met him with shrieks of laughter and noisy abuse, one person even going so far as to refer to the study in this book as “a formless abortion.” Those who were better equipped to follow him in his progress towards essentialism were clearly puzzled, and gave utterance to their feeling accordingly. For instance, one competent writer in the *Athenæum* referred to “the recondite, and to many impenetrable, character of the drawing by Picasso.” Persons who condemn Picasso condemn themselves. They confess they have not got beyond ephemeralism and reached the eternalism of Picasso. They are looking for ephemeral realities, whereas Picasso has sought and found the eternal verities. To him these are the essentials of art—the essentials that matter.

Nor was the aim of Herbin generally understood. We have travelled so far from proportionalism that when an artist appears who is seeking nothing else, gross vituperation and coarse calumny are bound to be thrown at him. In fact, his work, which is no more than a successful attempt to express proportion, symmetry, and balance, would be accepted as an overwhelming testimony that its author's mind is conspicuously devoid of the sense of the ridiculous.

With regard to the Dunoyer-Segonzac study very little was said. Most persons could see that it was an expression of the human form in a well-known sporting attitude. Not many were concerned that it was merely a movement, a synthesis of a variety of gestures wonderfully stated owing to the artist's mastery of drawing. A few might wonder what was meant by the distorted figures of the boxers and the broad line swinging in the background. But it is uncertain whether they would be satisfied to be told that the artist has gone far beyond the art of the Renaissance, and was expressing not only the movement of the boxers but the movement set up in the minds of the spectators. In the dynamics of Dunoyer-Segonzac is a truth of expression which no painter of the Renaissance has rivalled.

To Mr John D. Fergusson, Miss Estelle Rice, Mr Peploe, and Mr Phelan Gibb I owe the permission to reproduce the examples of their work. Of Mr Fergusson's picture not much need be said. His aims and methods have already been mentioned. It is one of his most recent works, and was recently exhibited at the Stafford Gallery, London. I noticed it was one of the exhibits that marked the tremendous advance

this painter has made. The exhibition contained two pictures showing the 1903 and 1910 treatment of practically the same subject. In fact, the same shawl and the same fan had been introduced in both. The 1903 was flabby, old-masterish, and falling to pieces ; the 1910 was tremendously full in treatment, had a wonderful range of vital colours—all sorts of reds, blues, and yellows. In both the silhouetted head of a woman was retained, but the idea of the treatment had changed. The first showed limited expression, lack of will to carry the treatment to its logical end ; in the second the artist had realised full will-power. He had seen the essential line and colour, had emphasised them, and had not been satisfied till everything was fully important.

In Miss Estelle Rice's work, which is discussed elsewhere, we discover a strong natural feeling for decoration and colour. She emphasises the fact that character in art involves regard to consistency in its development. Like Mr Fergusson, she brings everything into relation to the central theme, and so builds up the character of her subject and thus enables the character to attain the widest expression.

Mr Peploe has also been mentioned elsewhere. His work exhibits enormous concentration and will-power. It speaks in wonderfully vivid colour, and is one of the few examples of rhythm and direction attained by the tremendous energy and rapidity in the laying on of the pigment.

Mr Phelan Gibb, of whose work a fine example is given in this book, may be classed among the coming men who have not yet found themselves but have been found. His earlier pictures have shown a great deal of merit, accompanied

with tremendous and sincere effort. Rightly he is a Neo-primitive. His search for expression has carried him right back to a primitive if not a barbaric form of technique. Those who are not acquainted with the savage basis of his work would term it incoherent and meaningless. By so doing, such persons would simply confuse the sincerity and the wild disregard for convention which is struggling for utterance in this artist with a form of savage art in which there is no attempt to say anything, merely to do. The one great thing to Mr Gibb is vitality. How to get vitality. Is it to be attained by the use of the synthetic line, or found in simplification, unity, spontaneity, movement? Should light be the great thing. In any case he seems to say, "Let there be light in painting"—and there is light. There is no greater heresy than that darkness is the chief personality in a picture.

To MM. Bernheim-Jeune I am indebted for the loan of the block of the Auguste Chabaud study, an admirable example of the painter's ability to decorate the drama. The study is noticeable for the great simplicity, direction of line, suggestion, and space. M. Chabaud aims to express the idea of a thing, and is occupied with the search for simplicity and essentials.

It is due to the kindness of M. Kahnweiler that I am able to include a specimen of the recent work of André Derain. It shows the painter's strong feeling for decoration and the influence of primitive forms of art. It recalls the early painter who could only paint a saint and an acacia tree; but how widely different it is in width of expression, in unity, in movement, in harmony of curves and angles! Like the

illustrations to *L'Enchanteur Pourrisant*, it is an example of truth revealed by extreme simplification.

To MM. Fauconnier and Othon Friesz I owe thanks for sending me specimens of their work. The ideas of both painters have been mentioned in the chapter on "The New Spirit in Painting."

Italy.—I am indebted to M. Bernheim-Jeune for sending me two specimens of the work of the Futurists. Those selected are by Boccioni and Severini, perhaps the two biggest of these Italians. Those who saw the exhibition of the Futurists either in Paris or in London will doubtless have discovered that these painters are Presentists and Realists. But if their work has not got any of the attributes which are claimed nowadays for things of the future, it at least reveals many remarkable qualities. It is the product of men who are painters, brilliant colourists, and tremendously well-informed persons on all technical points of view. They possess talent rather than genius—the talent to make the most of every scientific attainment. They have strength and determination, which will go a great way towards breaking down opposition, and will make it possible for the new men to go forward toward that spiritual ideal which we are a little weary in waiting for. Painting, like drama, has fallen among realists. The Good Samaritan is a long time coming. Still, intelligence has arrived. Art has been divorced from intelligence for a very long time. The Futurists are the triumph of intelligence, if not of illumination. The extraordinary technical accomplishment of these painters suggests that their work is the

outcome of a long and carefully organised system of preparation. An examination of their pictures reveals a thorough foundation, which they never can get away from. Broadly speaking, there are two classes of painters: those who have never studied the Old Masters and those who have. The first include persons without artistic instinct of any sort, who begin with eccentricity, sensation, and shouting. With all the assurance of ignorance, they tell us that no preparation is necessary, and that the proper method of painting partakes largely of that of making a Workhouse Pudding. You stand by the Observatory on Greenwich Hill and throw the currants (paint) at the dough (canvas) placed somewhere in Greenwich. Some of the currants hit the target, and some miss it; it's all a matter of chance. The first also include persons who have remarkable instincts for drawing, paint, colour, composition, etc. These, without going to the length of extravagance of the plum-puddingists, produce works of art, and at some time or other refine and mature their methods by carefully conducted studies.

The second class is composed of painters who have faithfully studied the Old Masters, and, having realised their own strength, and being dissatisfied with the old limitations of vision and interpretation, and being possessed of a wider and deeper range of interest, break away either entirely or partly from their early influences. There are numerous painters to-day whose technical ideas are regarded as the negation of law and order, and who yet draw extensively upon their knowledge of law and order. Among these, Picasso, Matisse—who understands rhythm like a Leonardo da Vinci—Peploe,

Rice, Herbin, Fergusson, Wolmark, Gore. The list might be continued endlessly from Manet to that less-known old master El Greco, and so on.

Before we condemn the apparent extravagance of the Futurists, we must put a careful study of the Old Masters to their credit. In Severini's "Pan-Pan," reproduced in this book, there is abundant evidence of an academy-trained artist. The hands, heads, and feet are as carefully drawn as by an academician. Likewise, the study of women bathing in the sea is as academical as possible. The way the figures in the sea are drawn is simply splendid from the academy point of view. Take the wonderfully drawn horses in "The Rising City." Only artists who have gone through the mill could draw like this. Every line is, in fact, accurately drawn, not merely a curve dashed off, but the firm line of artists steeped in the immemorial tradition of art. Their colour, too, has an intellectual foundation. It is solid, deep, and rich, and lies flat on the canvas. They appear to be making a systematic application of the colour theories of Professor Denman W. Ross.

Having gone to the great creative epochs in painting for instruction and guidance, they are now using their knowledge upon which to build a new theory of painting. They are occupied with dynamic emotions. The following extracts from the manifesto issued by them under the direction of the poet Marinetti will explain their attitude :—

"We are young, and our art is violently revolutionary."

"We seek for a style of motion—a thing which has never been attempted before."

“We paint states of mind.”

“The spectator must live in the centre of the picture, and in order to make him do so the picture must be the synthesis of *what one remembers* and of *what one sees*.”

“We declare that what must be rendered is the dynamic sensation.”

“The gesture which we would reproduce on canvas shall no longer be a fixed *moment* in universal dynamism. It shall simply be the *dynamic sensation* itself.”

“All things move and change. Thus a running horse has not four legs, but twenty, and their movements are triangular.”

“The sixteen persons around you in a rolling motor bus are in turn and at the same time one, ten, four, three ; they are motionless and they change places ; they come and go, bound into the street, are suddenly swallowed up by the sunshine, then come back and sit before you, like persistent symbols of universal vibration.”

“The construction of pictures has hitherto been foolishly traditional. Painters have shown us the objects and the people placed before us. We shall henceforth put the spectator in the centre of the picture.”

“We shall banish the nude for a time.”

“The harmony of the lines and folds of modern dress works upon our sensitiveness with the same emotional and symbolical power as did the nude upon the sensitiveness of the Old Masters.”

“Our art will probably be accused of fermented and decadent cerebralism. But we shall merely answer that we

are, on the contrary, the primitives of a new sensitiveness, multiplied hundredfold, and that our art is intoxicated with spontaneity and power."

England.—Mr Alfred Wolmark, whose study I am glad to be able to include, is our most advanced colourist. He is also one of the few men who do not stand still. Two years ago Mr Wolmark was on the point of leaving for America. He had apparently reached a point in his career when the critics utterly failed to grasp his ideas. I wrote an article on his work in the *Art Journal*, showing that the painter's development was quite logical. For years he had studied the Old Masters, passing from Rembrandt to Velasquez, to Frans Hals, and so forth. Having mastered their principles and thoroughly developed a character sense, he was now setting them aside in favour of a colour sense, which he has to a remarkable degree. He had only recently "found" himself in colour. His much earlier pictures showed largely the influence of the Old Men. Since the article appeared, the critics have found Mr Wolmark and his colour, and praise both to the fullest degree. But this is not sufficient to a painter of Mr Wolmark's progressive tendency. He has a strong decorative sense, struggling for wider expression. Moreover, Mr Wolmark is not tottering in other men's shoes. He does his own work, and does it in a forceful, enthusiastic, and convincing way. His right field of action is the theatre or mural painting. Some day, when a start has been made at a properly organised mural-painting movement, when the master-builder, the architect, has been encouraged to make a place for it, when the muni-

cipalities have chosen men like Professor Lethaby, Reginald Halward, Voysey, and many others, to orchestrate art and craft, and bring them into harmony with his architectonic rhythm, then decorative painters like Alfred Wolmark will be found at the head of their decorative departments.

Mr S. F. Gore is another rising man. He is the president of the "Camden Town Group," which comprises a number of our talented younger men. His present study shows a maximum of harmony and luminosity, and it is very rich in colour and decorative qualities.

Miss Phyllis Vere Campbell, besides producing extraordinary psychological studies, is a remarkable psychological study herself. Not yet out of her teens, she is producing subjects which in former times would have sent her to Heaven with a halo of superstition round her head, or to the Hades in the form of microscopical cinders. No one can deny that a young artist who has developed such a biting sense of caricature, and this without training of any kind, has genius. She works in the subconscious region, her line moves and speaks. If she will allow her imagination to continue to have full play, and yet be more high-spirited about it —one of her characteristics is a preference for gloomy figures —she will be working for the good of posterity. Hogarth was bitterly satirical, but his figures were never low-spirited.

America.—Even more interesting are the sketches by Mr Feininger, an American artist, who resides at Berlin-Zehlendorf. They reveal a forceful and essential abstraction : the abstraction of movement of figures and things seen at different angles—

from the ground upwards, from a height downwards, and so on. The artist sees something behind externals—actions which transform. In attempting to express merely movements of persons and things, he invariably strays from the outer conventions of form. Mr Feininger has a very strong sense of movement in line, and expresses human experiences accordingly. He is a satirist who knows how to treat a subject with genial humour.

Poland.—I am indebted to Dr F. J. Retinger for permission to reproduce from his journal the sketches by Wyspianski and Schulski. The latter is one of the best caricaturists in Cracow. His work is distinguished by great delicacy of line, and poetry, by Da Vinci qualities. The study by Wyspianski is a beautiful example of that painter's work.

• • • • •

Coming to the illustrations representing the New Spirit in the theatre, the following notes may be of general interest :—

Repertory Theatre, Liverpool.—The photograph of a section of the auditorium is by Bedford, Lemere & Co., and was kindly sent by Mr Basil Dean. The Liverpool theatre is practically the first citizen-owned Repertory Theatre in this country. It is the outcome of the enthusiasm of 1200 shareholders, headed by Professor C. H. Reilly. The theatre was the old Star Music Hall, which has been entirely rebuilt according to the designs of Professor S. D. Adshead, the leader of the Liverpool town-planning movement. In the rebuilding, certain structural improvements

were made—the stage, for instance, being extended ten feet,—and the sunken orchestra and the Deutsches Theatre system of stage-lighting were introduced. The theatre contains some interesting plaster-work and decorations, carried out by John Tanner & Son.

To M. Bakst, the director of l'Art Décoratif, and M. de Brunoff, of Comædia Illustré, I am indebted for the Bakst designs.

The two drawings by Paul Iribe are introduced as an appreciation of the artist's brilliant work. They show the influence on the artist of Nijinsky's dancing. He has reproduced the rhythm with great skill. The composition of the figure against the black door is of particular interest as being a complete thing, in which continuity and unity are fully expressed.

The Théâtre des Arts is represented by four designs. Two of them, by M. Dresa, are for scenery and costume. One, by M. Dethomas, is a sketch for the programme of "Le Carnaval des Infants." And the fourth, by M. Hermann-Paul, is a design for the third act of Mr Bernard Shaw's *Mrs Warren's Profession*. The decorations for the latter were not very successful. M. Hermann-Paul sought to reproduce the excessive vibrations of thought, with the result that he introduced too much vibration into some of the scenery. The foliage merely tore down with terrific force on the actors, while the flat masses of colour went crossing and re-crossing with the force of piston-rods. M. Rouche was kind enough to send the illustrations.

The Hebbel Theatre.—The first impression of this exterior view is surprise. The house resembles no known type of building—neither palace, nor temple, nor dwelling, nor business house. The exterior is solid, almost gloomy. It has neither inscription nor explanatory ornament to show its purpose. That the interior is entirely different may be gathered from the view of the auditorium, which is of birch and palisander woods, upholstered in yellow and lilac silk. I am indebted to architect Oskar Kaufmann for the views.

The Schiller Theatre.—This theatre is constructed on the lines of Professor Littmann's theatres at Munich and elsewhere. The amphitheatre is developed from the principle which dominates the Munich theatres. But there are many alterations in detail. Here, 1450 spectators had to be accommodated as against 1106 in Prinzregenten Theatre, Munich. And, though the seats could be reduced in breadth, it was clear that such a greater number of spectators could not be accommodated in one single amphitheatre if the house were made as small as possible in area. It was obvious that this difficulty could only be solved by building a second amphitheatre over the rear of the main amphitheatre, which would rest upon a few columns and which afford the same advantages of seeing and hearing as the large amphitheatre. So an auditorium was obtained with the greatest breadth 25.48 metres, against 35.75 m. of the Prinzregenten Theatre, and with a depth of 25.30 m., measured from the first proscenium to the back seats, compared with the 27.00 m.

of the Munich Theatre. (Extract from Professor Littmann's book, sent by the architect for the purpose.)

The Fortuny System of Lighting.—Three illustrations of this system are reproduced by the courtesy of the Allgemeine Elektricitäts-Gesellschaft, Berlin. Two illustrate the technical part, which has been established after several years of experiment in view of the requirements of the scene. The technical part is composed of the firmament: the system of lighting which can be employed with or without the firmament, while keeping the round horizon actually in use.

The firmament is formed of two surfaces of silk impermeable to the air, fixed to an iron framework. It resembles, in fact, the hood of a cab.

The lighting installation consists of—

- (a) Arc lamps.
- (b) Coloured bands.
- (c) Coloured panes of glass.
- (d) Regulators.
- (e) Conducting wire.
- (f) And apparatus for the production of cloud and special effects.

The third illustration shows the firmament in use, and the absence, in consequence, of the usual stage lumber.

The Jaques-Dalcroze Institute, Hellerau.—The many and varied figures illustrating the Rhythmic Dances are the work of a young French artist, M. Thévenez, to whom I am indebted for their use. The four figures dancing in the

open represent the Jaques-Dalcroze spirit, and were reproduced from his *Year Book* for the purpose of indicating it. The Institute is being built at Hellerau. It is Greek in character, and is intended to express the dance spirit which was embodied in Greek architecture. Referring to this spirit, M. Jaques-Dalcroze says : "In Berlin or another city I will make only a music school, but in Hellerau I will elevate Rhythm to the height of a social Institution."

Of the Institute at Hellerau Dr Wolf Dohrn tells us : "With the Institute we build a big dwelling-house with forty rooms, and several small dwelling-houses with five to fifteen rooms each. The pupils, male and female, can dwell here together in groups, while meeting at meal-times in the immense dining-room in the principal house, and beyond this have places for common gatherings or solitary recreation in the library, hall, wood, and elsewhere." It is, in fact, constructed on the lines of Professor Geddes' Associated Homes for Students.

The Rohe-Zeh Theatre.—The whole stage of this theatre was designed by architect Zeh according to the proposals of Dr Rohe of Munich. The following may be said of their principles : though the modern stage setting is comparatively young, yet it has so established itself in our methods of production that it seems difficult to design a stage differing from it in type and relating itself to earlier forms. The stage of to-day is really descended from that of the Italian Renaissance, which in turn was derived from the antique stage, but soon after its appearance developed a different

tendency from the antique. Briefly to characterise this, it may be said that the Renaissance stage, in conjunction with that of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, began to lend itself more and more to the illusion of painted scenery in the place of its previous architectonic plastic form. It replaced bit by bit the original genuine architecture with painting, and in the late Renaissance, with the introduction of the frame proscenium, entirely adopted the picture form. The theatre of to-day is obsessed by this, and the extreme is reached in the most recent theatres, such as the Munich *Kunstler* Theatre, where so shallow is the stage that the scene appears quite flat and comes into conflict with the tri-dimensionality of the actor freely moving about the stage, and from this an optical impression of the play arises which cannot for any length of time satisfy the æsthetic sense.

To rectify this, the actor must again be put into a picture which harmonises with his three dimensions, *i.e.* in a clearly defined space, of which man himself is the centre. The designing of the scenery is not a painter's but an architect's problem. Now, Rohe's stage is based on architectonic ideas, which at one time were alone the standard of high dramatic culture, viz. the classical Greek and Shakespearean stages. It takes up the tradition of the original Elizabethan stage—not the form of the later Shakespearean stage.

Like the Elizabethan stage, Rohe's is formed of several parts: (1) an entirely free fore-stage; (2) a middle stage held by walls; (3) and a rear stage enclosed by the architecture of the stage structure; (4) further, by an arrangement

which serves for verandahs, balconies, battlements, etc. No. 1 serves all scenes played in the open ; 2 and 3, interior scenes with outlooks on interiors or exteriors ; 4, scenes where, as is often the case with Shakespeare, actors have to speak to each other situated on a height. It will be gathered from this that the Elizabethan stage was only apparently primitive, and its advantages lie in the variety of its scenic possibilities. Dr Rohe believes that these possibilities have all along been misinterpreted.

The Röhreschen Theatre.—Explanation of the horizontal section through the auditorium above the first circle :—

The balcony which adjoins the Royal boxes is exclusively for the use of the Court. The seats, like those in the amphitheatre, are parallel with the stage, with a free field of vision. The balcony inclines towards the stage. In the middle is the Royal Box, with saloon joining boxes on either side. The corridors may be reached by the foyer stairs. To comprehend the diagram it is necessary thoroughly to understand that the plan is not really horizontal. It slopes from the stage upwards to the back. (See the section also made of auditorium.) The foyer and corridors lie on the one level, at the same height as the refreshment saloon. The end of the corridor near the stage is on the same level at the lowest part of the second circle. Exits from the boxes are by way of the foyer stairs ; from the balcony through exits on either side.

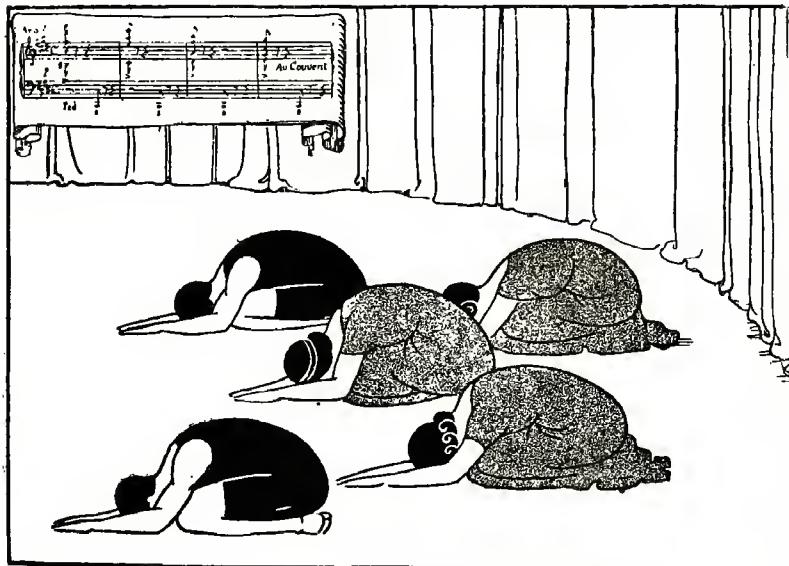
After the proofs had left my hand, some friends were

kind enough to send some additional matter, which may be of general interest :—

The Dusseldorf Schauspielhaus.—To Dr Ernst Leopold Stahl, whom I met recently at Dusseldorf, I am indebted for the following facts on the Dusseldorf Schauspielhaus, under the management of Luise Dumont and Herr G. Lindemann. The theatre was built in 1905, and is now in its seventh season. It is a private undertaking, supported by wealthy citizens. But the State, recognising its importance, has since 1911 allowed it a subsidy of £2500. (Dr Stahl adds parenthetically : “Of course it does not pay, and it never will.”) It produces advanced plays, and puts on about twenty new plays every year. Dr Stahl literary adviser from 1909-11, as well as manager of the School of Dramatic Art connected with the theatre. An article on the subject of this theatre was written by Mr Granville Barker and published in the *Fortnightly Review*. During my visit to the theatre I noticed several innovations. These were : the use of the symbolic stage and scenery, the rise of the curtain announced by electric lights running round the proscenium frame, the use of the whole horizon. One of the principles upheld is that the centre of the stage is the essential point of attraction. All the decorations are made with this view, and all the lines have direction leading to this one central point.

Théâtre des Arts, Paris.—M. Rouché writes to say he is extending his field of action. He is organising a series of

performances at the Châtelet which will enable him to expand his ideas on a much larger scale. The Châtelet will also have a season of the Russian Ballets on a much more lavish scale than hitherto, and will produce Wilde's *Salomé* with an extraordinary Russian setting.



The Dalcroze System of Dancing.

Design by M. Thévenez.

II

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE NEW IDEAS OF RHYTHM AND THE ART OF THE THEATRE

THE following is a list of books and journals referred to in the text of this book, and other sources of information :—

ENGLAND.

The Flight of the Dragon. Laurence Binyon. (John Murray.)

Expounds the principles of rhythm and unity as practised by the early Chinese painters, and now being practised by modern painters. These principles are contained in the six Canons of Chinese Painting formulated in the Sixth Century.

The Mask. (Arena Goldoni, Florence.)

An illustrated quarterly, devoted mainly to the exposition of the ideas of Gordon Craig.

The Art of the Theatre. Gordon Craig. (Heinemann.)

A reprint of Mr Craig's articles contributed to *The Mask*, and *The Art of the Theatre* published by Foulis.

A National Theatre. William Archer and H. Granville Barker.

A plea for a National Theatre, supported by facts and figures.

Wagner's Bad Luck. David Irvine. (Watts.)

An examination of the errors in the translation of Wagner's recently published autobiography.

National Opera Houses and Theatres. Edwin O. Sachs. (Batsford.)

A valuable exhaustive architectural survey of the principal theatres of England and the Continent.

ENGLAND—*continued.*

The Stage of the “Globe.” An article by Professor E. K. Chambers.
(Vol. x., “Works of Shakespeare.”)

The Stage Year Book.

Contains a summary of “The Theatrical Year in Germany,”
by Frank E. Washburn Freund.

The New Age.

Criticisms of, and an International Symposium on, “The
Art of the Theatre.” Vols. viii., ix.

The Saturday Review.

Articles on the drama and lyricism, by Herbert Trench.
June, etc., 1911.

T.P.’s Magazine.

Special articles on “The Reform of the Theatre,” “Max
Reinhardt,” “The Russian Ballets,” “The State Theatre,”
etc. June to November 1911.

The Repertory Theatre. Basil Dean. (Philip & Son, Liverpool.)

This is the substance of a lecture on the Liverpool
Repertory Theatre. But it does not contain an account of
the innovations, such as the Reinhardt system of lighting.

FRANCE.

L’Art Théâtral Moderne. Jacques Rouche. (Edouard Cornély et
Cie, Paris.)

A brief estimate of the work of the chief pioneers of the
new movement in the theatre, gathered from various literary
sources.

L’Art Décoratif. Revue de l’art ancien et de la vie artistique
moderne. Directeur, Fernand Roches. 4 Rue le Goff
(Paris).

One of the best illustrated art journals in Paris. It
contains reliable articles on the Art Theatre.

FRANCE—continued.

Vaslav Nijinsky. Six vers de Jean Cocteau. Six dessins de Paul Iribe. (Société Générale d'Impression, Paris.)

Contains wonderful illustrations of the rhythm of the Russian dancer.

GERMANY.

Max Reinhardt. Siegfried Jacobsohn. (Erich Reiss, Berlin.)

An enthusiastic admirer's account of Max Reinhardt's development as represented by thirty productions.

Das Charlottenburger Schiller-Theater. Prof. Max Littmann. (München.)

Das Künstler-Theater. Prof. Max Littmann. (München.)

Die Revolution des Theaters. *Ergebnisse aus dem Münchener Künstler Theater.* Georg Fuchs. (Georg Müller, München.)

An exposition of the revolutionary ideas embodied in the Künstler Theatre.

Ausstellung des Bühnenentwürfe. Fritz Erler. (München.)

Das deutsche Theater in Berlin. (Müller, München.)

A symposium on the Deutsches Theater, edited by Paul Legband.

Gartenstadt Hellerau. (Verlag der Gartenstadt, Hellerau.)

An illustrated description of the chief features of Hellerau.

Der Rhythmus. Jaques-Dalcroze Year Book. (Edited by Dr Wolf Dohrn, Hellerau.)

Von der Absicht des Drama. Jocza Savits. (München.)

A defence of the non-scenic Shakespeare.

Bühnen Beleuchtung System Fortuny. (Allgemeine Elektricitäts Gesellschaft, Berlin.)

A technical account of Fortuny's lighting system.

GERMANY—*continued.*

Die Musik und die Inszenierung. Adolphe Appia. (München.)

An exposition of the author's ideas of stage setting applied to Wagner's music dramas.

Masken. Halbmonatsschrift des Düsseldorfer Schauspielhauses.

The official organ of the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus.

Die Szene. (Die Drei Masken, München, Karlstr. 21.)

The official organ of the Society of Artistic Stage Producers.

Blätter des deutschen Theaters. Edited by Felix Hollender and

Arthur Kahane. (Erich Reiss, Berlin.)

The official organ of the Deutsches Theater.

Die Lösung des modernen Theaterproblems durch das neue patentierthe System des Architekten August Zeh.

Das Theater der Fünftausend. (München.)

Detailed accounts of the Rohe-Zehschean invention of a new theatre auditorium.

HUNGARY.

A huszodik szárad szinpadja. Jenő Kemény. (Buda-Pesth.)

A detailed exposition of Mr Kemény's new type of stage.

POLAND.

Miesiecznik Literacki, Artystyczny. Edited by Dr J. H. Retinger. (Cracow.)

A new progressive journal devoted to nationalism in literature, art, and drama.

RUSSIA.

Contribution to the History and Technique of the Theatre. Meierholdt. (Moscow.)

III

LIST OF ART THEATRES

THE number of art theatres in Europe is small. A list is given of those wherein artistic productions of plays take place. An asterisk denotes a theatre occupied wholly by the search for the artistic representation.

ENGLAND.

Dublin. The Abbey Theatre.

If the proposal to make Gordon Craig producer is realised.

PARIS.

*Théâtre des Arts.

The Châtelet.

The Odéon.

Théâtre de l'Œuvre.

GERMANY.

Cologne. State Theatre.

Düsseldorf. Dumont-Lindemann Schauspielhaus.

Leipzig. Stadttheater.

Berlin. *Deutsches Theatre.

*Kammerspielhaus.

Neues Schauspielhaus.

Schiller Theatre.

Dresden. Court Theatre.

Hamburg. Municipal Theatre.

Lessing Gesellschaft.

AUSTRIA.

Vienna. Royal Opera House.

BAVARIA.

Munich. *Künstler Theatre.

Schauspielhaus.

Court Theatre.

Beyreuth. Wagner Theatre.

POLAND.

Cracow. State Theatre.

RUSSIA.

Moscow. *Art Theatre.

As a rule the endowed theatres in Germany are in a position to give artistic productions. But whether they do so mainly depends on the taste of the directors, many of whom are not enthusiastic about the art of the theatre. And as these theatres are constantly changing their directors, it is difficult to identify them with the new movement.

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